

Political Institutions and Behavior
PSCI 356/556

Spring 2023
Tuesday 2pm – 4:40pm
329 Harkness

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306 Harkness Hall
Office Hours: Mondays 1-3pm
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This seminar will introduce you to classic as well as contemporary research on comparative institutions and behavior. The course will provide good grounding in an array of topics in these areas, while highlighting the range of methodological approaches employed in the field. This course is one of the four required courses in the comparative politics Ph.D. field sequence and will be open to any PhD student and advanced undergraduate, by instructor permission.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course is a seminar. Students are expected to actively contribute to the discussion each and every week. This necessitates a careful reading of each article/chapter 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. Students must attend every class. A student who misses class must get in touch with me within 24 hours of the start of the missed class period and then complete a make-up assignment. Each week, students must submit two questions about the readings that can serve as a basis for class discussion. These must be submitted by email by midnight the evening before class.

In four weeks of the student's choosing, the student is also expected to write a short response paper, critically discussing of some or all of the readings (not just one). These are not meant to be just a summary of each reading. They could critically examine the readings' arguments, compare the readings' findings and contribution to a larger puzzle in the literature and/or present the strengths and weaknesses of the research design and data used. These response papers should be 250 to 350 words and are also due by midnight the night before class. At least two of the four papers must be completed by or including Week 9.

In addition, the students will each write a research paper within the topic of comparative institutions and behavior. As part of that process, the students will write a 2 page proposal, identifying the research question, situating the question in the relevant literature, describing the evidence to be assessed (i.e., data to be used, type of analyses), and expectations about the findings. This is due March 3 and will be discussed with the Professor in meetings following Spring Break. The final research paper will be due on May 1.

Grades will be based on general class discussion (18%); 4 response papers (8% each for a total of 32%); a research proposal (10%); and final research paper (40%). Undergraduate students in the

class may, with prior permission, opt for a final exam instead of a research proposal and paper.

Late Policies

**Barring extraordinary circumstances, late response papers will be marked down a whole letter grade if turned in after midnight, but before Tuesday's class. They will not be accepted if received after 2pm on Tuesday, resulting in a zero for that paper. Late research proposals and final research papers 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 research paper proposal or research 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 book chapters and journal articles. Links to articles and book chapters will be available through Blackboard. We read multiple chapters from a few books. They are:

Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Helmke, Gretchen. 2017. *Institutions on the Edge*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

You can either access them as e-copies from UR library or else purchase wherever you get new or used books.

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 – response papers, research proposal and research paper – must be done independently and not in collaboration with another.

Disability Resources

The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: [http://disability@rochester.edu](mailto:disability@rochester.edu); (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall.

Pandemic Policies

In light of the challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic, I encourage all students to communicate with me as promptly as possible any concerns they have about missing class for illness/quarantine

and for meeting class deadlines. The goal of this class is to remain as rigorous and fair as possible, while also allowing for enough flexibility for students to do their best work despite the difficult circumstances.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 17: Introduction: Democratic Concepts

Dahl, Robert. 1989. *Democracy and Its Critics*. New Haven: Yale UP, chs. 6-8, 15.

Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. "Rethinking Representation," *APSR* 97: 515-528.

PART I: Comparative Democratic Institutions

Week 2: January 24: Political Parties

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Brothers. Chapter 2.

Aldrich, John. 1995. *Why Parties?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-2.

Stokes, Susan et al. 2013. *Brokers, Voters and Clientelism*. New York: Cambridge UP. Ch 1 and 7

Week 3: January 31: Party System Formation

[Lipset, Seymour and Stein Rokkan](#). 1990. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction." In Peter Mair (ed) *The West European Party System*. Oxford: Oxford UP. 91-138.

[Inglehart, Ronald](#). 1977. *The Silent Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 2.

[Bates, Robert H.](#) 1983. "Modernization, Ethnic Competition and the Rationality of Politics in Contemporary Africa." In *State versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*. Eds. Donald Rothchild and Victor Olorunsola. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 152-171.

[Neto, Octavio and Gary Cox](#). 1997. "Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures and the Number of Parties." *American Journal of Political Science*. 41(1): 149-174.

Week 4: February 7: Electoral Rules: Shaping the Party System

Fujiwara, Thomas. 2011. "A Regression Discontinuity Test of Strategic Voting and Duverger's

Law.” *QJPS*. 6: 197-233.

Fortin-Rittberger, Jessica and Berthold Rittberger. 2014. “Do electoral rules matter? Explaining national differences in women’s representation in the European Parliament.” *European Union Politics*. 15(4): 496-520.

[Boix, Carles](#). 1999. “Setting the Rules of the Game.” *American Political Science Review* 93(3).

McElwain, Kenneth Mori. 2008. “Manipulating Electoral Rules to Manufacture Single-Party Dominance.” *AJPS*. 52(1): 32-47.

Week 5: February 14: Party Positioning

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row. Chapters 7-8.

[Riker, William](#). 1982. *Liberalism against Populism*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press. 197-232.

Miller, Gary and Norman Schofield. 2003. “Activists and Partisan Realignment in the United States.” *American Political Science Review*. 97(2): 245-260.

Meguid, Bonnie M. 2005. “Competition Between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success.” *American Political Science Review*, 99 (3): 347-59.

Week 6: No Class February 21

Week 7: February 28: Parliamentary Government Formation and Governance

** *Research Proposal Due by 5pm on March 3*

Baron, David. 1991. “A Spatial Bargaining Theory of Government Formation in Parliamentary Systems.” *APSR* 85(1): 137-64.

Warwick, Paul and James Druckman. 2006. “The Portfolio Allocation Paradox: An Investigation into the Nature of a Very Strong but Puzzling Relationship.” *EJPR*. 45(4) 635-65.

Martin, Lanny and Randy Stevenson. 2010. “The Conditional Impact of Incumbency on Government Formation,” *APSR* 104 (3): 503-18.

Dewan, Torun and Arthur Spirling. 2011. “Strategic Opposition and Governmental Cohesion in Westminster Democracies.” *APSR*. 105(2): 337-58.

March 7 – no class for Spring Break

Week 8: March 14: Parliamentary Government Survival and Termination

Lupia, Arthur and Kaare Strøm. 1995. "Coalition Termination and the Strategic Timing of Parliamentary Elections," *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 648-669.

Smith, Alastair. 2003. "Election Timing in Majoritarian Parliaments." *BJPS*. 33(3): 397-418.

Schleiter, P. and E. Morgan-Jones. 2009. "Constitutional Power and Competing Risks: Monarchs, Presidents, Prime Ministers, and the Termination of East and West European Cabinets," *American Political Science Review*, 103(3): 496-512.

Plescica, Carolina, Alejandro Ecker and Thomas Meyer. 2021. "Do party supporters accept policy compromises in coalition governments?" *European Journal of Political Research* 61(1): 214-229.

Week 9: March 21: Divided Power, Presidentialism and Federalism

Helmke, Gretchen. 2017. *Institutions on the Edge*. New York: Cambridge UP. Chapters 1-4
https://rochester.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ROCH_INST/1vg5sr1/alma9978361186105216

Erik Wibbels, "Madison in Baghdad? Decentralization and Federalism in Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 9: 165-188.

Weingast, Barry R. 2005. "The Performance and Stability of Federalism: An Institutional Perspective," in Claude Menard and Mary M. Shirley (eds.) *Handbook of New Institutional Economics*. Dordrecht: Springer.

PART II: Comparative Behavior

Week 10: March 28: Issue Voting

[Rabinowitz, George and Elaine Macdonald](#). 1989. "A Directional Theory of Issue Voting." *American Political Science Review* 83(1): 93-121.

[Petrocik, John R.](#) 1996. "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study." *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 825-50

Bélanger, Éric and Bonnie M. Meguid. 2008. "Issue Salience, Issue Ownership, and Issue-based Vote Choice." *Electoral Studies*, 27 (3): 477-91.

Hall, Peter A. and Noam Gidron. 2017. "The politics of social status: economic and cultural roots of the populist right." *British Journal of Sociology*. 68(S1)

Week 11: April 4: Economic and Retrospective Voting

Duch, Raymond M. and Randy Stevenson. 2006. "Assessing the magnitude of the economic vote over time and across nations." *Electoral Studies*.

Samuels, David. 2004. "Presidentialism and Accountability for the Economy in Comparative Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 98(3): 425-436.

Kayser, Mark and Michael Peress. 2012. "Benchmarking across Borders: Electoral Accountability and the Necessity of Comparison." *APSR* 106 (3): 661-84.

Nichter, Simeon and Michael Peress. 2016. "Request Fulfilling: When Citizens Demand Clientelist Benefits." *CPS*. 1-32.

Week 12: April 11: Strategic and Expressive Voting

Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-7

Kedar, Orit. 2005. "When Moderate Voters Prefer Extreme Parties: Policy Balancing in Parliamentary Elections." *American Political Science Review* 99(2): 185-199.

Schuessler, Alexander A. 2000. "Expressive Voting." *Rationality and Society*. 12(1)

Week 13: April 18: Turnout and Vote Buying

[Aldrich, John](#). 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 37(1): 246-278.

Bendor, Jonathan, Daniel Diermeier and Michael Ting. 2003. "A Behavioral Model of Turnout." *American Political Science Review* 97(2): 261-280.

Helmke, Gretchen and Bonnie M. Meguid. 2008. "Endogenous Institutions: The Origins of Compulsory Voting Laws." Unpublished manuscript.

Kasara, Kimuli, and Pavithra Suryanarayan. 2015. "When Do the Rich Vote Less Than the Poor and Why? Explaining Turnout Inequality Across the World." *AJPS* 59 (3): 613-627.

Week 14: April 25: Representation, Responsiveness and Accountability

Powell, G. Bingham. 2000. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University

Press. Chapters 1, 2 and 6.

Stokes, Susan. 2001. *Mandates and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch 1

Thomson, Robert et al. "The Fulfillment of Parties' Election Pledges: A Comparative Study on the Impact of Power Sharing." *American Journal of Political Science* 61.3 (2017): 527–542.