

Spring 2020 | Thursdays, 4:00-6:30 pm | Classroom: Mitchell Hall 117

POLS 521/496: Comparative Political Institutions

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:00pm (and other times by appointment)

Course Description

This seminar introduces students to selected topics in the extensive literature on political institutions. The first part of the course surveys major theoretical approaches in the study of institutions. Next, we will review both theoretical and empirical work on political institutions, with an emphasis on core *democratic* institutions, such as electoral systems, federalism, and courts. Over the course of the semester we will discuss issues related to the origins and functioning of political institutions, as well as their consequences on a number of dimensions, including democratic accountability, economic development, and minority representation. Our discussions will consider multiple methodological approaches to these topics, and evidence from a range of empirical contexts.

Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) from the departments of Political Science can be seen [here](#). This course is designed with three goals in mind:

- Providing an overview of classic and (mostly) contemporary topics and debates in the study of comparative political institutions
- Developing skills necessary to conduct independent research. These include the ability to identify potential research ideas, formulate research questions, and write research papers.
- Fostering the ability to evaluate and critique existing research and, most importantly, to provide *valuable feedback* to ongoing projects – that is, feedback that is respectful and offers constructive criticism, including ideas on how a research project can be improved.

Course Requirements

Readings

In this course, we will read a combination of books, book chapters, and journal articles. Students are expected to attend class and keep up with the readings. Students are **not required to purchase** any books for this class.

Grading

There are two grading schemes, A and B. Graduate students will be graded according to A. Undergraduate students will have the option of choosing between A and B. *The deadline for letting me know your decision is February 6, and after this date no changes will be allowed.*

Grading scheme A

- Reading, participation, and class performance (35% of final grade). This class is a discussion seminar, not a lecture course. It is essential that students be prepared to discuss ALL of the readings each and every class. Many of the works we will read are a blend of theory, methods, and substantive empirical analysis. Class participants should thus be prepared to describe and compare the week's required readings from two points of view:
 - What are the main **substantive arguments** being made? What phenomena are the targets of explanation? Are they clearly identified and defined? What variables are proposed to explain them? What causal mechanisms are proposed as linkages?
 - What **methodological approach** is taken to enhance the credibility of those arguments and how well does it succeed? What kinds of empirical implications of the theory are examined? How are the important variables measured? How are cases selected?

Student responsibilities include the following:

- Reading responses (10%). Each week, students must submit a reading response by email (due by midnight the evening before class). Each response must contain a critical discussion of all or some the readings (300 to 400 words) and *two questions* about the readings that can serve as a basis for class discussion.
- Leading discussions (10%). Each student will be in charge of leading discussion of one of the readings in each session—there will be some flexibility about this depending on class size and number of readings for the week. Short (one-two page) handouts of notes should be provided.
- Participation in class (15%). This component of your grade is based on both the quantity, i.e., how often you *voluntarily* speak in class discussions, and the quality of participation (according to the criteria described above). This means, of course, class attendance is vital and required.
- Short research proposals (30% of final grade). During the semester, students must submit and present three short research proposals on a topic relevant to the course material, which should be a maximum of 600 words in length (each worth 10% of the final grade). Proposals should outline: (1) an existing theoretical or empirical puzzle, (2) an intuition as to a solution to this puzzle, (3) the data needed to test this puzzle, and (4) the identification strategy (empirical approach) to be used.
- Final research proposal (35% of final grade). At the end of the semester, students will submit a research proposal that develops one of their short proposals (should be a maximum of 3,500 words). This proposal should include a more detailed literature review, a discussion of theory and hypotheses, and a serious discussion of how to obtain the data necessary to execute the analysis. For projects with publicly available data, successful projects will include a rough preliminary analysis.

Grading scheme B

- Reading, participation, and class performance (35% of final grade). Exactly as scheme A
- Exams (65% of final grade). There will be two *take-home exams* (each worth 32.5%).

Course Expectations and Policies

1. Late work. Course work must be completed on time. Papers will lose one letter grade for every day of lateness. No “Incomplete” grades will be given except for cases of severe emergency. The emergency must be documented and reported to me immediately. (Professor’s discretion applies).

2. Reading. Students must complete the readings prior to coming to class. I encourage bringing in not only thoughts on the readings but also questions based on parts of the readings that seemed unclear, difficult to grasp, or that you found interesting.
3. Participation. There *is* such a thing as bad participation. Students are encouraged to learn how to both be good listeners and good speakers—a balance between both promotes good participation. While engaged discussion is encouraged any language that is disrespectful will result in dismissal. *If anyone feels they are unsafe or disrespected in the classroom they should report to me immediately.*
4. Academic honor and respectful behavior. All activities associated with this course must comply with University policies regarding academic integrity, honesty, and discrimination. The University's full statement on academic honesty and the consequences for failure to comply is available in the [Pathfinder](#). Violations of these policies will be handled with the utmost seriousness.
5. Name. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. If you have a preferred name or gender that is different as to what will be listed in the roster, please email me so that your preferences can be respected. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.
6. Disabilities. Accessibility Services (Mesa Vista Hall 2021, 277-3506) provides academic support to students who have disabilities. If you think you need alternative accessible formats for undertaking and completing coursework, you should contact this service right away to assure your needs are met in a timely manner.
7. Subject to Change Statement. Information contained in this syllabus, other than the grade policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Course Schedule

Note: Readings marked with a * are mandatory and must be completed before coming to class. All other readings are completely optional.

Week 1 (January 23). Introduction

No required readings.

Week 2 (January 30). Institutions and Institutionalism(s)

Background readings

- North, Douglass C. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- North, Douglass C. 1991. "Institutions." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5(1): 97- 112.

Required readings

- * Hall, Peter and Rosemary Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies* 44: 935-57.
- * Shepsle, Kenneth A. 1989. "Studying Institutions: Some Lessons from the Rational Choice Approach." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1(2):131-147.
- * Pierson, Paul. 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." *American Political Science Review* 94(2): 251-267.
- * Knight, Jack, 1992. *Institutions and Social Conflict*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. **Chapters 1,2,3,5.**

Week 3 (February 6). State, Democracy, Rule of Law

- * Olson, Mancur. 1993 “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development.” *American Political Science Review* 87(3): 567-576.
- * Sánchez de la Sierra, Raúl. “On the Origin of States: Stationary Bandits and Taxation in Eastern Congo.” *Journal of Political Economy*. Forthcoming.
- * Weingast, Barry R. 1997. “The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law.” *American Political Science Review* 91: 245-263.
- * North, Douglas C. and Weingast, Barry R. 1989 “Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England.” *The Journal of Economic History* 49(4):803-832.
- * Blaydes, Lisa, and Eric Chaney. 2013. “The Feudal Revolution and Europe’s Rise: Political Divergence of the Christian West and the Muslim World before 1500 CE” *American Political Science Review* 107(1): 16-34.

Week 4 (February 13). Electoral Systems: Consequences

Background readings

- Riker, William. 1982. “The Two-Party System and Duverger’s Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science.” *American Political Science Review* 76: 753-766.
- Carey, John and Matthew Shugart. 1995. “Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank Ordering of Electoral Systems.” *Electoral Studies* 14(4): 417-439.

Required readings

- * Clark, William R., and Matt Golder. 2006. “Rehabilitating Duverger’s Theory: Testing the Mechanical and Strategic Modifying Effects of Electoral Laws.” *Comparative Political Studies* 39: 679-708.
- * Cox, Gary W, Jon H. Fiva, and Daniel M. Smith. 2016. “The Contraction Effect: How Proportional Representation Affects Mobilization and Turnout.” *The Journal of Politics* 78(4):1249-1263.
- * Golder, Matt, and Jacek Stramski. 2010. “Ideological Congruence and Electoral Institutions.” *American Journal of Political Science* 54 (1): 90-106.
- * Crisp, Brian F, Maria C. Escobar-Lemmon, Bradford S. Jones, Mark P. Jones, and Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson. 2004. “Vote-seeking Incentives and Legislative Representation in Six Presidential Democracies.” *The Journal of Politics* 66 (3): 823-846.
- * Iversen, Torben and David Soskice. 2006. “Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More Than Others.” *American Political Science Review* 100 (2): 165-181.

First research proposal due Friday, February 14 by midnight (at the latest)

Week 5 (February 20). Electoral Systems: Origins

- * Boix, Carles. 1999. “Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies.” *American Political Science Review* 93(3): 609-624.
- * Cusack, Thomas, Torben Iversen and David Soskice. 2007. “Economic Interests and the Origins of Electoral Systems.” *American Political Science Review* 101 (3): 373-391.

- * Calvo, Ernesto. 2009. "The Competitive Road to Proportional Representation: Partisan Biases and Electoral Regime Change under Increasing Party Competition." *World Politics* 61 (2): 254-295.
- * Bawn, Kathleen . 1993. "The Logic of Institutional Preferences: German Electoral Law as a Social Choice Outcome." *American Journal of Political Science* 37: 965-989.
- * Díaz-Cayeros, Alberto and Beatriz Magaloni. 2001. "Party Dominance and the Logic of Electoral Design in Mexico's Transition to Democracy." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 13 (3): 271-293.

Week 6 (February 27). Presidentialism and Parliamentarism I

- * Martin, Lanny W. and Randolph T. Stevenson. 2001. "Government formation in parliamentary democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1): 33-50.
- * Warwick Paul V. and James N. Druckman. 2006. "The portfolio allocation paradox: An investigation into the nature of a very strong but puzzling relationship." *European Journal of Political Research* 45(4): 635-65.
 - Baeck Hanna, Debus Marc, and Dumont Patrick. 2011. "Who gets what in coalition governments? Predictors of portfolio allocation in parliamentary democracies." *European Journal of Political Research* 50(4): 441-478.
- * Warwick Paul. 1992. "Economic-Trends and Government Survival In West European Parliamentary Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 86(4): 875-887.
- * Smith, Alastair. 2003. "Election Timing In Majoritarian Parliaments." *British Journal of Political Science* 33(3): 397-418.
- * Schleiter, Petra and Edward 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.

Week 7 (March 5). Presidentialism and Parliamentarism II

Background readings

- Linz, Juan. "The Perils of Presidentialism" in Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds, *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996, 124-142.
- Shugart, Matthew and John Carey. 1992. *Presidents and Assemblies*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Required readings

- * Cheibub, José Antonio. 2007. *Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy*, New York: Cambridge University Press. **Chapters 1,4,5,6**
- * Frye, Timothy. 1997. "A Politics of Institutional Choice: Post-Communist Presidencies." *Comparative Political Studies* 30 (5): 523-552.
- * Samuels, David and Matthew Shugart, 2010. *Presidents, Parties and Prime Ministers: How the Separation of Powers Affects Party Organization and Behavior*, New York: Cambridge University Press. **Chapters 1-3.**
- * Shugart, Matthew S. 1995. "The Electoral Cycle and Institutional Sources of Divided Presidential Government." *The American Political Science Review* 89(2): 327-343.
- * Martínez-Gallardo, Cecilia. 2012. "Out of the Cabinet: What Drives Defections From the Government in Presidential Systems?" *Comparative Political Studies* 45(1), 62-90.

Week 8 (March 12). Bureaucracy

- * McCubbins, Mathew D. and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science* 28(1): 165-179.
- * McCubbins, Mathew D., Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast. 1987. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 3(2): 243-277.
- * Huber, John D., Charles R. Shipan and Madelaine Pfahler. 2001. "Legislatures and statutory control of bureaucracy." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(2): 330-345.
- * Gulzar, Saad and Benjamin Pasquale. 2017. "Politicians, Bureaucrats, and Development: Evidence from India." *American Political Science Review* 111(1): 162-183.
- * Brierley, Sarah. "Unprincipled Principals: Co-opted Bureaucrats and Corruption in Ghana." *American Journal of Political Science*. Forthcoming.

Second research proposal due Friday, March 13 by midnight (at the latest)

Week 9 (March 19). SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Week 10 (March 26). Federalism and Decentralization

- * Qian, Yingyi and Barry R. Weingast. 1997. "Federalism as a commitment to preserving market incentives." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 11(4): 83-92.
- * Brancati, Dawn. 2006. "Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism?" *International Organization* 60(3): 651- 685.
- * O'Neill, Kathleen. 2003. "Decentralization as an Electoral Strategy." *Comparative Political Studies* 36 (9): 1068-91.
- * Wibbels, Erik. 2000. "Federalism and the Politics of Macroeconomic Policy and Performance." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(4): 687-702.
- * Desposato, Scott and Ethan Scheiner. 2008. "Governmental Centralization and Party Affiliation: Legislator Strategies in Brazil and Japan." *American Political Science Review* 102(4): 509-524.

Week 11 (April 2). Historical Political Economy

- * Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation." *American Economic Review* 91: 1369-1401.
 - Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. 2002. "Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 107: 1231-1294.
- * Banerjee, Abhijit and Lakshmi Iyer. 2002. "History, Institutions and Economic Performance: The Legacy of Colonial Land Tenure Systems in India." *American Economic Review* 95: 1190-1213.
- * Michalopoulos, Stelios and Elias Papaioannou. 2013. "Pre-Colonial Ethnic Institutions and Contemporary African Development." *Econometrica* 81(1):113-152.
- * Lee, Alexander and Kenneth Schultz. "Comparing British and French Colonial Legacies: A Discontinuity Analysis of Cameroon." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 7: 1-46.
- * Cirone, Alexandra and Brenda Van Coppenolle. 2019. "Bridging the Gap: Lottery-Based Procedures in Early Parliamentarization." *World Politics* 71(2): 197-235.

Week 12 (April 9). Authoritarian Institutions

- * Gandhi, Jennifer. 2008. *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Chapters 1-3**
- * Svolik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Chapters 1,4,5,6**
- * Boix, Carles Milan W. Svolik. 2013. "The foundations of limited authoritarian government: Institutions, commitment, and power-sharing in dictatorships." *Journal of Politics* 75(2), 300-316.
- * Malesky, Edmund and Paul Schuler. 2011. "The Single-Party Dictator's Dilemma: Information in Elections without Opposition." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 36(4): 491-530.
- * Brownlee, Jason. 2007. "Hereditary Succession in Modern Autocracies." *World Politics* 59(4): 595-628.

Third research proposal due Friday, April 10 by midnight (at the latest)

Week 13 (April 16). MPSA – NO CLASS

Week 14 (April 23). Institutions and Minority Representation

- * Roberts, Andrew, Jason Seawright and Jennifer Cyr. 2013. "Do Electoral Laws Affect Women's Representation?" *Comparative Political Studies* 46(12), pp.1555-1581.
- * Bhavnani, Rikhil R. 2009. "Do electoral quotas work after they are withdrawn? Evidence from a natural experiment in India." *American Political Science Review* 103(1): 23-35
- * Hughes, Melanie. 2011. "Quotas, and Minority Women's Political Representation Worldwide." *American Political Science Review* 105(3): 604-620.
- * O'Brien, Diana Z. and Johanna Rickne. 2016. "Gender Quotas and Women's Political Leadership." *American Political Science Review* 110(1): 112-126.
- * Lee, Alexander and Varun Ramachandra "Do gender quotas hurt less privileged groups? Evidence from India." *American Journal of Political Science*. Forthcoming

Week 15 (April 30). Applications: Causal Inference and the Effects of institutions

- * Alexandra Cirone and Brenda Van Coppenolle. 2018. "Cabinets, Committees, and Careers: The Causal Effect of Committee Service." *The Journal of Politics* 80(3): 948-963.
- * Fourinaies, Alexander. "How Do Campaign Spending Limits Affect Electoral Competition? Evidence from Great Britain 1885-2010." Working paper. October 2018.
- * de Benedictis-Kessner, Justin. 2018. "Off-Cycle and Out of Office: Election Timing and the Incumbency Advantage." *Journal of Politics* 80(1): 119-132
- * Bhavnani, Rikhil R. 2018. "The Effects of Malapportionment on Cabinet Inclusion: Subnational Evidence from India." *British Journal of Political Science* 48(1): 69-89.
- * Lucardi, Adrián. 2019. "The Effect of District Magnitude on Electoral Outcomes. Evidence from Two Natural Experiments in Argentina." *British Journal of Political Science* 49(2): 557-577.
- * Eggers, Andy. 2015. "Proportionality and Turnout: Evidence from French Municipalities." *Comparative Political Studies*. 48(2): 135-167.

Week 16 (May 7). Applications: Endogenous Institutional Change

- * Binder, Sarah A. 1996. "The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice: Allocating Parliamentary Rights in the House, 1789-1990." *American Political Science Review* 90: 8-20.
- * Kemahlioglu, Ozge, Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro, and Shigeo Hirano. 2009. "Why primaries in Latin American presidential elections?" *Journal of Politics* 71(1): 339-352.
- * Meinke, Scott R., Jeffrey K. Staton, and Steven T. Wuhs. 2006. "State Delegate Selection Rules for Presidential Nominations, 1972-2000." *The Journal of Politics* 68(1): 180-193.
- * Herron, Michael C. and Alan E. Wiseman. "Gerrymanders and Theories of Law Making: A Study of Legislative Redistricting in Illinois." *The Journal of Politics* 70(1): 151-167.
- * Weeks, Ana C. 2018. "Why Are Gender Quota Laws Adopted by Men? The Role of Inter- and Intra-Party Competition." *Comparative Political Studies* 51(14):1935-1973.