

# **POL 9720: Comparative Political Institutions**

University of Missouri

Spring 2014

W 3:00-5:30PM, Professional Building 104

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## **Course Description**

The study of comparative political institutions has exploded over the past twenty years. As theories of new institutionalism took hold in American politics, comparative scholars began to explore the causes and consequences of the wide variety of rules and norms governing democracies around the world. This gave rise to an array of questions such as: Why do democracies emerge and break down? How do presidential and parliamentary systems differ and what are the consequences of these differences? How do electoral rules shape party systems and the nature of political representation? How do political institutions affect policy outputs and policy outcomes? Where do institutions come from in the first place? Drawing on theories of new institutionalism, specifically historical institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism, comparative politics scholars have created a vast literature that answers these and many other questions about political institutions.

In this course, we will examine a cross-section of the literature on comparative political institutions to provide you with sufficient background for future research in this area. The subject area is enormous, and we will not be able to cover all aspects of it. Instead, I have selected topics within the literature on comparative political institutions that are of key importance and that I will be able to guide you in understanding. We begin the course by looking at some of the major theoretical approaches to studying political institutions and how ideas of representation and accountability are embedded in democratic institutions. We then examine some of the large literatures on executive-legislative relations, electoral rules, party systems, representation, and policy. We conclude with discussions reconciling the exogeneity and endogeneity of institutions. By the end of this course, students should have a solid understanding of major trends in the literature on comparative political institutions and be able to explore the field more deeply on their own.

## **Course Requirements**

### **Class Participation and Attendance (20%)**

This course is a seminar, not a lecture series. It is your responsibility, as well as mine, to come to class prepared to discuss the information and claims found in the readings and explore related research possibilities. If any of us shirk, we all lose. I expect no absences in the course, and I encourage you to discuss any circumstances with me that will preclude you from attending class. I also expect you to arrive on time. If you do need to miss class, please contact me ahead of time to let me know that you will not be able to attend and to make arrangements to complete an alternate assignment. A large portion of my overall evaluation of your performance in the course will depend on the quality of your seminar participation.

Keep in mind that the purpose of the seminar is to engage in informed group discussion: we are not interested in uninformed opinion. This means that students should closely and critically read each book or article on the reading list, and spend time thinking about what each contributes to the topic that week and to comparative politics in general. Class discussion will focus on such issues as the theoretical arguments being made (both explicitly and implicitly), the empirical evidence that is marshaled to test these arguments, weaknesses of the work, and potential directions for future study.

Grades for participation (including discussion questions and attendance) will be assigned at the end of the semester, but you may ask for feedback on your performance at any time. If you have concerns about the quality and quantity of your participation in the course, I hope you will speak to me. Remember, this is a seminar, so just showing up to class is not enough. You must come to class prepared to participate in an informed discussion of the issues raised by the week's readings. If you just show up to class every week, but never say a word, you can expect to receive a D or lower for class participation (20% of your grade).

The following general grading scale will be used for participation and preparation:

- A: The student made a very strong contribution to the course. Class discussion, comments, and presentations reflected understanding and analysis of the material, and were constructive. Constructive means that a student does not simply identify a weakness or problem. Rather, constructive comments identify a problem and offer suggestions for how to address the weakness or problem.
- B: The student contributed meaningfully to the course. Class participation and/or presentations went beyond repeating the assigned material, perhaps identifying weaknesses in the current literature, but did not make many constructive suggestions about how weaknesses might be overcome or how the literature might be usefully extended in the future.
- C: The student did not contribute meaningfully to the seminar. Class participation and/or presentations were limited to repeating the assigned material rather than making connections or extensions.
- D or lower: The student attended class, but did not participate in discussions or present meaningful questions for academic debate.

Finally, because we will engage in vigorous academic debate during class, classroom etiquette is vital. Please work to ensure that you make comments in ways that invite discussion. Our classroom contains members with various life experiences, divergent perspectives, varying levels of experience with political science research, and different strategies for defending their views. Please state your opinions constructively and respectfully, listen carefully when your colleagues are speaking, and speak to me if you are offended by something that is said in class. If you do not follow these guidelines, your participation grade will be adversely affected.

## **Talking Points (25%)**

For each class (excluding the Mini-Conference and classes where the student is writing an Analysis Paper), the student will email me (by the Tuesday before class at 9:00am) three "talking points" about the readings. I will arrange these talking points and have students read them aloud. The talking points should be in the form of a short paragraph outlining the question or argument.

These questions are intended to improve understanding of the material and inspire discussion, so they should be the most interesting questions or arguments that the student has identified based on the week's readings. Questions can be related to a single reading, a set of readings, or the week's selections as a whole. Each talking point should refer to a different chapter or article from the weekly readings. You may also include questions of clarification if there are areas in the reading that you find difficult to understand. However, keep in mind that I will evaluate the quality of your questions as a critical part of this grade component. Given the size of the class, and the amount of material covered, not everybody gets an opportunity to ask every

question they have. Consider this your opportunity to get your questions on record. The talking points will be graded on a 5-point scale.

This is an example of an effective talking point:

McClosky believes that economics should be more literary in its writings so that it tells a story to its readers. This argument fits with Kuhn's point that scientists write to an audience of other scientists. Obviously, audience is important, but how important? Has the field of political science suffered from the same use of scientific jargon in the same manner as economics? Has the language that political scientists use hindered the field in accomplishing its goals of explanation and prediction of social phenomenon?

This example highlights the main argument of the author (*economics should be more literary*) and relates it to readings from previous weeks (*Thomas Kuhn*). The talking point then presents a question that pits the two arguments against one another, thereby creating points for discussion. Note that this is only one of the many ways to produce a quality talking point.

## Weekly Analysis (25%)

At 5 points throughout the semester, students should write a 2-3 page analysis of the week's readings and email them to me (by the Tuesday before class at 9:00am). Each paper will be worth 5%. The primary goal of the papers is not to earn grades but to provide you with an opportunity to reflect on the readings and develop critical thinking and writing skills. Feel free to use these papers as an aid in class discussion. **Late papers will not be accepted.**

Keep the following questions in mind when crafting your analysis paper:

- *Theory*: Does the work make original contributions to the current state of theory on the topic being addressed? Are the assumptions and causal mechanisms elaborated clearly? Are the assumptions plausible? Is the theory internally consistent? Do the hypotheses follow logically from the theory?
- *Empirical Design*: Is the research design used by the author(s) suitable for testing the theoretical hypotheses? If not, how might this problem be resolved? Are there other relevant empirical issues the work has failed to consider?
- *Data*: Do the measures of the dependent and independent variables adequately correspond to the theoretical concepts of interest? Are better measures possible? Are more reliable data available to test the hypotheses? Are the data and construction of measures described in sufficient detail so as to permit replication?
- *Findings*: Have the results been interpreted correctly? Are the interpretations substantively interesting? How well do the findings fit with theoretical expectations? Are there other possible explanations of the phenomenon of interest that need to be considered? Are there other testable implications arising from the theory that might give us greater leverage on the posited relationships?

Be sure that your analysis is a coherent whole. In other words, you should not haphazardly offer answers to all of these questions, but use them as a guide to develop an original argument for your paper. You should have an introduction that sets out the thesis or primary argument of your analysis paper, a body that develops your thesis/argument citing the readings as needed to support your points, and a conclusion that rounds out your analysis paper. This is an opportunity to go beyond restating key points from the readings and think intelligently and originally about what they mean, what they tell us about comparative politics, and what concerns you about them. The best papers will be those that take up a single point or small issue and develop a thoughtful analysis of that point. Do not try to cover too much in the paper.

## Research Paper (30%)

Another requirement is the development of an original research paper, involving the development and empirical testing of one or more hypotheses on one of the broad substantive topics that we cover in the seminar. This paper may be quantitative or qualitative in nature, depending on the nature of the question and the student's methodological training, but in any case it must be analytical and theoretical in nature rather than descriptive.

The research paper should discuss the theoretical motivation for the proposed research, citing the relevant literature (at least 20 sources) to which the research seeks to contribute. It should clearly explain the original theoretical argument made and explicitly posit the key testable hypotheses derived from this theory. The paper should also discuss the dependent variable(s) and central explanatory variables that would be employed in an empirical investigation of these hypotheses. In addition to submitting a written version, students will make an 12-15 minute presentation of their research paper to the class.

The final paper must be 25-30 pages in length, and should be comparable to an academic journal article in style. Please note that this must be an original paper for this course, and can not overlap in any substantial way with a paper written for another course; if there is any question please talk to me about it and bring me a copy of the other paper. I strongly encourage students to typeset using L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X. More information will be provided later in the semester.

There will be four components of research design:

1. A 3-4 page proposal that is due by the beginning of class on Wednesday, April 2 (worth 5% of the course grade). An effective proposal will include the following sections: *Background/literature* in which the student identifies gaps in the literature and introduces the research question, *Theory and Hypothesis* where the student identifies the credible mechanism, develops the theory and derives testable hypotheses, *Research Design* where the student discusses possible data sources and potential methods, and finally *Potential Problems/Obstacles* where the student can discuss areas in which he/she needs help.
2. A final version of the paper emailed to me (which I will then distribute to the rest of the class) by 3:00pm on Wednesday, April 30 (worth 15% of the course grade). Additionally, if quantitative methods were used, the student must email me the data set and replication materials by the due date.
3. Participation in the Mini-Conference on Wednesday, May 7 and 14 (5%). Each student will make a 15 minute presentation and serve as a discussant/reviewer for two other student presentations. These 1-2 page reviews should follow the format of journal reviews and will be collectively worth 5%. I will provide more in-depth description of the requirements for the Reviews at a later date, but they should include an overall summary and then comments/criticisms arranged into three topics: aesthetics, empirical and theoretical. An effective presentation will include the following elements:
  - introduce research question
  - place your research in the context of the literature
  - derive hypotheses
  - describe your research design
  - discuss your empirical results
  - conclude by offering implications and future research

The paper will be graded on the clarity and contribution of the theory as an addition to the literature on international conflict, as well as on the appropriateness of the empirical analysis proposed to test the theory.

These papers will be expected to conform to the submission standards of the *American Journal of Political Science*.

**Grammatical mistakes in the talking points, weekly analysis papers or in the research design will NOT be tolerated. Any student turning in an assignment with grammatical mistakes have the assignment returned without a grade. The student will have one opportunity to improve and resubmit the work with a grade penalty in a time frame decided by me.**

Final class grades will be assigned with the following grading scale:

**A+ = 97.0 - 100**  
**A = 90.0 - 96.99**  
**B+ = 87.0 - 89.99**  
**B = 80.0 - 86.99**  
**C+ = 77.0 - 79.99**  
**C = 70.0 - 76.99**  
**D+ = 67.0 - 69.99**  
**D = 60.0 - 66.99**  
**F = 0 - 59.99**

There are no required textbooks. All required readings will be available on electronic course reserves or through jstor.

## Other Considerations

### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. Any efforts to pass off someone else's ideas as your own is considered plagiarism! When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

**Plagiarism (or cheating in any way) will not be tolerated. Any student plagiarizing will receive an automatic "F" in the course, no exceptions!**

### ADA Statement

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability-related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the Office of Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu>), S5 Memorial Union, 573- 882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

## Class Schedule:

We will spend as much time as necessary on each topic for this course. Because I am unable to predict in advance how long each topic will take, the schedule below is only a rough guideline.

## Methodological and Theoretical Foundations

### January 22: Overview/Syllabus

### January 29: Theories of Political Institutions

- Remmer, Karen L. 1997. "Theoretical Decay and Theoretical Development: The Resurgence of Institutional Analysis" *World Politics* 50(1): 34-61.
- Hall, Peter and Rosemary C.R. Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms" *Political Studies* 44: 935-957.
- Rothstein, Bo. 1996. "Political Institutions: An Overview". In *A New Handbook of Political Science*, ed. R. E. Goodin and H.-D. Klingemann. New York: Oxford University Press, 133-166.
- Helmke, Gretchen, and Steven Levitsky. 2004. "Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda" *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (4): 725-740.
- David D. Laitin. 2003. "The Perestroika Challenge to Social Science," *Politics & Society*, 3: 163-184.

### February 5: Democracy, Representation, and Accountability

- Collier, David, and Steven Levitsky. 1997. "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics* 49 (3):430-451.
- Munck, Gerardo L., and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies* 35 (1):5-34.
- Manin, Bernard, Adam Przeworski, and Susan C. Stokes. 1999. "Elections and Representation" in *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, eds. Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin. New York: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1 (29-54).
- Samuels, David J. and Matthew Soberg Shugart. 2003. "Presidentialism, Elections, and Representation" *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 15(1): 33-60.
- Hellwig, Timothy, and David Samuels. 2008. "Electoral Accountability and the Variety of Democratic Regimes." *British Journal of Political Science* 38 (1):65-90.
- Huber, John D., and G. Bingham Powell, Jr. 1994. "Congruence Between Citizens and Policymakers in Two Visions of Liberal Democracy," *World Politics* 46: 291-326.

### February 12: Parliamentarism, Presidentialism, and Mixed Regimes

- Cheibub, Jose Antonio. 2006. *Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2.

- Siaroff, Alan. 2003. "Comparative presidencies: The inadequacy of the presidential, semi-presidential and parliamentary distinction." *European Journal of Political Research* 42 (3):287-312.
- Linz, Juan J. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy* 1 (Winter).
- Stepan, Alfred, and Cindy Skach. 1993. "Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation." *World Politics* 46:1-22.
- Mainwaring, Scott, and Matthew Soberg Shugart. 1997. "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal." *Comparative Political Studies* 29 (4):449-471.
- Cheibub, Jos A., and Fernando Limongi. 2002. "Democratic Institutions and Regime Survival: Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies Reconsidered." *Annual Review of Political Science* 5:151-179.

## February 19: NO CLASS

## Research Areas

### February 26: Coalition Building and Government Formation

- Laver, Michael and Kenneth Shepsle. 1990. "Coalitions and Cabinet Government." *American Political Science Review* 84(3): 873-890.
- Strom, Kaare, Ian Budge, and Michael J. Laver. 1994. "Constraints on Cabinet Formation in Parliamentary Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 38 (2):303-335.
- Martin, Lanny and Randolph Stevenson. 2001. "Government Formation in Parliamentary Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1): 33-50.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder Jr., Aaron B. Strauss, and Michael M. Ting. 2005. "Voting Weights and Formateur Advantages in the Formation of Coalition Governments." *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (3):550-563.
- Druckman, James N. and Michael F. Thies. 2002. "The Importance of Concurrence: The Impact of Bicameralism on Government Formation and Duration." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(4): 760-771.
- Tavits, Margit. 2008. "The Role of Parties' Past Behavior in Coalition Formation." *American Political Science Review* 102 (4):495-508.

### March 5: Government Duration in Parliamentary Systems

- King, Gary, James E. Alt, Elizabeth Burns, and Michael Laver. 1990. "A Unified Model of Cabinet Dissolution in Parliamentary Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 34:846-871.
- Lupia, Arthur, and Kaare Strm. 1995. "Coalition Termination and the Strategic Timing of Legislative Elections." *American Political Science Review* 89:648-665.
- John D. Huber. 1996. "The Vote of Confidence in Parliamentary Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 90(2): 269-282.
- Strom, Kaare, and Stephen M. Swindle. 2002. "Strategic Parliamentary Dissolution." *American Political Science Review* 96 (3):575-591.

- 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.

## **March 12: Presidential Institutions**

- Amorim Neto, Octavio. 2006. "The Presidential Calculus: Executive Policy Making and Cabinet Formation in the Americas." *Comparative Political Studies* 39 (4):415-440.
- Metcalf, Lee Kendall. 2000. "Measuring Presidential Power." *Comparative Political Studies* 33 (5):660-686.
- Negretto, Gabriel L. 2004. "Government Capacities and Policymaking by Decree in Latin America: The Cases of Brazil and Argentina." *Comparative Political Studies* 37 (5):531-562.
- Shugart, Matthew Soberg. 1995. "The Electoral Cycle and Institutional Sources of Divided Presidential Government." *American Political Science Review* 89(2):327-43.
- Dettrey, Bryan and Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer. 2009. "Presidential Institutions and Voter Turnout." *Comparative Political Studies* 42 (10):1317-1338.

## **March 19: Electoral Rules and Legislative Behavior**

- Carey, John M. and Matthew Soberg Shugart. 1995. "Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas" *Electoral Studies* 14(4): 417-39.
- Crisp, Brian F. et al. 2004. "Vote-seeking Incentives and Legislative Representation in Six Presidential Democracies" *The Journal of Politics* 63(3): 823-846.
- Stratmann, Thomas and Martin Baur. 2002. "Plurality Rule, Proportional Representation, and the German Bundestag: How Incentives to Pork-barrel Differ Across Electoral Systems". *American Journal of Political Science* 46(3): 506-514.
- Crisp, Brian F. Kristin Kanthak, and Jenny Leijonhufvud. 2004. "The Reputations Legislators Build: With Whom Should Representatives Collaborate?" *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 703-716.

## **March 26: NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK**

### **April 2**

- **Research design proposal due**

### **April 9: Electoral Rules and Party Behavior**

- William H. Riker. 1982. "The Two-Party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 76 (4): 753-66.
- Amorim Neto, Octavio, and Gary W. Cox. 1997. "Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures, and the Number of Parties." *American Journal of Political Science* 41 (1):149-174.
- William R. Clark and Matt Golder. 2006. "Rehabilitating Duverger's Theory: Testing the Mechanical and Strategic Modifying Effects of Electoral Laws." *Comparative Political Studies* 39: 679-708.

- Stoll, Heather. 2008. "Social Cleavages and the Number of Parties: How the Measures You Choose Affect the Answers You Get." *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (11): 1439-1465.
- Carey, John M., and Simon Hix. 2011. "The Electoral Sweet Spot: Low-Magnitude Proportional Electoral Systems." *American Journal of Political Science* 55 (2): 383-397.
- Ordeshook, Peter C. and Olga V. Shvetsova. 1994. "Ethnic Heterogeneity, District Magnitude, and the Number of Parties." *American Journal of Political Science* 38(1): 100-123.
- Daniel N. Posner. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 529-545.

## April 16: Institutions and Economic Policy

- Tsebelis, George. 1999. "Veto Players and Law Production in Parliamentary Democracies: An Empirical Analysis." *American Political Science Review* 93(3): 591-608.
- Cheibub, Jose Antonio. 2006. "Presidentialism, Electoral Identifiability, and Budget Balances in Democratic Systems." *American Political Science Review* 100 (3):353-68.
- Hallerberg, Mark and Patrik Marier. 2004. "Executive Authority, the Personal Vote, and Budget Discipline in Latin American and Caribbean Countries." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(3): 571-587.
- Bawn, Kathleen, and Frances Rosenbluth. 2006. "Short versus Long Coalitions: Electoral Accountability and the Size of the Public Sector." *American Journal of Political Science* 50:251-265.
- Linzer, Drew A., and Ronald L. Rogowski. 2008. "Lower Prices: The Impact of Majoritarian Systems in Democracies around the World." *Journal of Politics* 70 (1):17-27.
- 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.

## April 23: Endogenous Institutional Change

- Carey, John M. 2000. "Parchment, Equilibria, and Institutions." *Comparative Political Studies* 33(6/7): 735-761.
- Bawn, Kathleen. 1993. "The Logic of Institutional Preferences: German Electoral Law as a Social Choice Outcome." *American Journal of Political Science* 37(4): 965-989.
- 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.
- Benoit, Kenneth and John W. Schieman. 2001. "Institutional Choice in New Democracies: Bargaining over Hungary's 1989 Electoral Law." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 13(2): 153-182.
- Remmer, Karen L. 2008. "The Politics of Institutional Change: Electoral Reform in Latin America, 1978-2002." *Party Politics* 14 (1):5-30.
- Greif, Avner and David Laitin. 2004. "A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change." *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 633-652.
- Colomer, Josep M. 2005. "It's Parties That Choose Electoral Systems (or, Duverger's Laws Upside Down)." *Political Studies* 53 (1):1-21.

**April 30: Professionalization I**

- Research paper due via email by 3:00pm.

**May 7: Mini-Conference: Week I**

**May 14: Mini-Conference Week II**