

# POLI 7971: Comparative Elections

Fall 2014  
Room: Stubbs 210  
W 2:00 - 4:50

Dr. Joshua D. Potter  
Office: Stubbs 232  
Email: jdp97711@gmail.com

## Course Description

This course provides an introduction to theoretical issues surrounding electoral systems in democratic countries. The United States – by virtue of being the subject of much attention by electoral scholars – will receive particular emphasis in the selected readings, but case studies will be drawn from virtually all areas of the world. Thus, this course should be of interest to students working in both the comparative and American subfields or any student planning on producing research on elections, political parties, representation, or political institutions more broadly. The selection of readings attempts to strike a balance between older, canonical works and newer, cutting-edge research. Although the main theoretical and empirical thrust of the class will tend toward cross-national statistical work on institutions, substantial portions of the syllabus also pertain to sociological and behavioral topics and we will discuss such methodological approaches as process tracing narratives, field and lab experiments, survey designs, formal theoretical work, and agent-based computational modeling.

## Course Objectives

The primary aim of this course is the production of a full-length working paper of original content pertaining to some facet of electoral politics. See the following sections for specific discussions of how this process will play out during the semester. The second aim of this class is to familiarize the student with major theoretical strains in the comparative and American literatures on elections. The final aim is to develop an aptitude in students for both giving and receiving critical feedback on the research process.

## Course Policies

In general, the standard guidelines apply. Academic integrity is of paramount importance and substantial evidence of plagiarism or cheating will result in a failing grade in the class. Except for the most extenuating of circumstances (accompanied by adequate documentation and justification), I do not accept late work and I expect each student to come to each of our course meetings having completed the readings and assignments for that day. I am an advocate of limited technology in the classroom; laptops and smart pads are acceptable for the purposes of referring to the course readings and electronic notes during discussion. Cell phones, smart phones, or other electronic devices are unacceptable. Checking email, sending text messages, and other forms of communication are also unacceptable. On the first day of class and periodically throughout the remainder of the semester, we will receive the University's protocol for emergency situations in order to ensure a safe learning environment.

## Requirements and Evaluation

### *Participation*

**For each week** in the schedule below, students are expected to have read, reflected upon, and synthesized the manuscripts listed for that day. In addition, students should be prepared to participate in discussion, both in response to comments from their peers as well as to direct questions from me about the content of the readings. This requirement is worth 20 points.

### *Reading Responses*

For **weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6**, students are required to submit a “reading response” based on one of the readings. It is important to note that these responses do not need to be for manuscripts assigned for *that* day. Rather, students are encouraged to look through the entire syllabus and select five manuscripts that they find interesting. Substantively, these responses will serve as warmups for the paper writing exercise; additional guidelines appear below. I will provide feedback on each response and each of the five responses are worth 4 points for a total of 20 points.

### *Research Brainstorm*

For the **Week 7** meeting, each student is to bring a research question for which she intends to write her paper. Additionally, students should be able to explain why this question is substantively important and also provide some ideas about what type of data they would utilize to answer the question. We will workshop these questions as a group in class. Students should submit a written copy of the question, the explanation of its importance, and data sources for 10 points.

### *Preliminary Paper Draft*

For the **Week 10** meeting, each student is to submit a hard copy of his paper. At this point, the following sections of the paper should be drafted: introduction, theory, data, and a sketched outline of the analysis. This document should be about 15 double-spaced pages in length (excluding works cited). I will collect the papers and circulate to your peers, who – together with me – will provide comments to you on the paper during a subsequent class. This paper draft is worth 20 points.

### *Peer Critiques and Discussion*

For the **Week 12** meeting, we will spend a portion of the class discussing one another’s paper drafts. Each student is expected to have read 2-3 of her peers’ papers in detail and drafted a hard copy of her comments. These comments (and the in-class discussion) are worth 10 points.

### *Final Paper Draft*

For the **Week 14** meeting, submit a hard copy of your final paper draft. In addition to improvements on the introduction, theory, and data sections based on peer critiques, each student should have completed a rough empirical analysis section as well as a concluding section. The total length of the paper should come to about 25 pages of double-spaced text (excluding works cited). My assessment of your paper’s improvement and prospects of eventual publication counts for 20 points.

## Reading Response Guidelines

Reading responses should be 3-4 double-spaced pages in length and address the following questions:

- (1) What is the research question and what is the scope of this question? That is, for what types of cases, time periods, and relationships is the question germane?
- (2) What is the novel contribution of the manuscript? How is its importance motivated by the authors and, if applicable, what tension in the literature is the paper attempting to adjudicate?
- (3) What is the independent variable, the dependent variable, and the theory that connects one to the other? Are there competing explanations that the authors account for?
- (4) Describe the analytical strategy and the paper's results.
- (5) Describe an *alternative* analytical strategy that you might have adopted.
- (6) What is one objectively defensible strength of the paper?
- (7) What is one objectively defensible weakness of the paper?

One reading response must be submitted in each of our first five class meetings, although the manuscript you focus on can come from any point in the semester. I would suggest spreading your responses across a handful of topics, but it might be useful to eventually write multiple responses within whatever topic you are planning to write your research paper. Of course, beyond the formal course requirements, drafting these reading responses is simply a great exercise to undertake for your own edification. Having several reading responses on hand in excess of those you must submit for the course is a great way to come prepared for discussion (and, eventually, prepare for comprehensive exams).

The purpose of the responses is to serve as a warmup exercise to begin thinking about your own research: they are intended not only to help you digest a manuscript's material, but also to begin thinking about it in critical terms (much like the task you will be put to as reviewers in the academic peer review process). However, the work we are reading in this seminar is generally topflight in approach, content, and execution. To that end, strike a tone of *fair-minded* criticism; this will also prepare you for the point in the semester at which you will be put to the task of evaluating your peers' research ideas.

## Reading Schedule

The reading schedule begins on the next page. In general, I have assigned 6-7 manuscripts or chapters of books, although some weeks have slightly heavier work loads. ***All listed readings are required for that day's class meeting.*** Students are not required to purchase any books for this course; I will make all readings – including scanned book chapters – available electronically. In general, the readings come from the comparative literature, but I have made an effort to include at least one manuscript from the American context each week.

Finally, please note that there are required readings for the first course meeting.

## Week 1 / Aug 27 / Social Determinants of Party Systems

Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan. 1990. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments." In *West European Party Systems* edited by Peter Mair. Oxford University Press.

Chhibber, Pradeep and Mariano Torcal. 1997. "Elite Strategy, Social Cleavages, and Party Systems in New Democracies: Spain." *Comparative Political Studies* 30(1): 27-54.

Chhibber, Pradeep and John Petrocik. 1989. "The Puzzle of Indian Politics: Social Cleavages and the Indian Party System." *British Journal of Political Science* 19: 191-210.

Zielinski, Jakub. 2002. "Translating Social Cleavages into Party Systems: The Significance of New Democracies." *World Politics* 54: 184-211.

Brooks, Clem and Jeff Manza. 1997. "Social Cleavages and Political Alignments: U.S. Presidential Elections, 1960 to 1992." *American Sociological Review* 62(6): 937-946.

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.

## Week 2 / Sept 3 / Institutional Determinants / Reading Response Due

Cox, Gary W. 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2, 4, and 5.

Gallagher, Michael and Paul Mitchell. 2005. *The Politics of Electoral Systems*. Oxford University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

Taagepera, Rein and Matthew Soberg Shugart. 1993. "Predicting the Number of Parties: A Quantitative Model of Duverger's Mechanical Effect." *American Political Science Review* 87(2): 455-464.

Carey, John M. and Simon Hix. 2011. "The Electoral Sweet Spot: Low-Magnitude Proportional Representation." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 383-397.

Moser, Robert G. "Electoral Systems and the Number of Parties in Postcommunist States." *World Politics* 51(3): 359-384.

Shugart, Matthew Soberg. 2001. "Electoral 'Efficiency' and the Move to Mixed-Member Systems." *Electoral Studies* 20(2): 173-193.

**Week 3 / Sept 10 / Mixed Approaches / Reading Response Due**

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.

Clark, William Roberts and Matt Golder. 2006. "Rehabilitating Duverger's Theory: Testing the Mechanical and Strategic Modifying Effects of Electoral Laws." *Comparative Political Studies* 39(6): 679-708.

Mozaffar, Shaheen, James R. Scarritt, and Glen Galaich. 2003. "Electoral Institutions, Ethnopolitical Cleavages, and Party Systems in Africa's Emerging Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 379-390.

Stoll, Heather. 2013. *Changing Societies, Changing Party Systems*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2 and 7.

Moser, Robert G. and Ethan Scheiner. 2012. *Electoral Systems and Political Context: How the Effects of Rules Vary Across New and Established Democracies*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7.

Potter, Joshua. 2014. "Demographic Diversity and District-Level Party Systems." *Comparative Political Studies* Online First: 1-29.

**Week 4 / Sept 17 / The Spatial Model Part I / Reading Response Due**

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Voting*. Harper and Brothers. Chapter 8.

Budge, Ian. 1994. "A New Spatial Theory of Party Competition: Uncertainty, Ideology, and Policy Equilibria Viewed Comparatively and Temporally." *British Journal of Political Science* 24(4): 443-467.

Fowler, James H. and Michael Laver. 2008. "A Tournament of Party Decision Rules." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52(1): 68-92.

Adams, James, Michael Clark, Lawrence Ezrow, and Garrett Glasgow. 2004. "Understanding Change and Stability in Party Ideologies: Do Parties Respond to Public Opinion or to Past Election Results?" *British Journal of Political Science* 34(4): 589-610.

Cox, Gary. 1990. "Centripetal and Centrifugal Incentives in Electoral Systems." *American Journal of Political Science* 34(4): 903-935.

Calvo, Ernesto and Timothy Hellwig. 2011. "Centripetal and Centrifugal Incentives under Different Electoral Systems." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(1): 27-41.

**Week 5 / Sept 24 / The Spatial Model Part II / Reading Response Due**

Clark, Michael. 2008. "Valence and Electoral Outcomes in Western Europe, 1976-1998." *Electoral Studies* 28(1): 111-122.

McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2006. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press. Chapter 2.

Garand, James C. 2010. "Income Inequality, Party Polarization, and Roll-Call Voting in the U.S. Senate." *The Journal of Politics* 72(4): 1109-1128.

Tavits, Margit. 2007. "Principle vs. Pragmatism: Policy Shifts and Political Competition." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 151-165.

Tavits, Margit and Joshua D. Potter. 2014. "The Effect of Inequality and Social Demand on Party Strategies." Forthcoming. *American Journal of Political Science*.

Meguid, Bonnie. 2005. "Competition between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy and Niche Party Success." *American Political Science Review* 99(3): 347-360.

Adams, James, Michael Clark, Lawrence Ezrow, and Garrett Glasgow. 2006. "Are Niche Parties Fundamentally Different from Mainstream Parties? The Causes and the Electoral Consequences of Western European Parties' Policy Shifts, 1976-1998." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3): 513-529.

**Week 6 / Oct 1 / Comparative Voting Behavior / Reading Response Due**

Zechmeister, Elizabeth. 2006. "What's Left and Who's Right? A Q-Method Study of Individual and Contextual Influences on the Meaning of Ideological Labels." *Political Behavior* 28: 151-173

Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, and Ebonya Washington. 2010. "Party Affiliation, Partisanship, and Political Beliefs: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 104(4): 720-744.

Adams, James, Lawrence Ezrow, and Zeynep Somer-Topcu. 2011. "Is Anybody Listening? Evidence that Voters do not Respond to European Parties' Policy Statements During Elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 370-382.

Jerit, Jennifer, Jason Barabas, and Toby Bolsen. 2006. "Citizens, Knowledge, and the Information Environment." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 266-282.

Anderson, Christopher J. and Christine A. Guillory. 1997. "Political Institutions and Satisfaction with Democracy: A Cross-National Analysis of Consensus and Majoritarian Systems." *American Political Science Review* 91(1): 66-81.

Bowler, Shaun and Todd Donovan. 2002. "Democracy, Institutions, and Attitudes about Citizen Influence on Government." *British Journal of Political Science* 32(2): 371-390.

Gartner, Scott Sigmund. 2008. "The Multiple Effects of Casualties on Public Support for War: An Experimental Approach." *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 95-106.

**Week 7 / Oct 8 / Voter Turnout / Research Brainstorm Due**

Powell, G. Bingham. 1986. "American Voter Turnout in Comparative Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 80(1): 17-43.

Blais, André and Agnieszka Dobrzynska. 1998. "Turnout in Electoral Democracies." *European Journal of Political Research* 33:239-261.

Blais, André, Robert Young, and Miriam Lapp. 2000. "The Calculus of Voting: An Empirical Test." *European Journal of Political Research* 37:181-201.

Lassen, David Dreyer. 2005. "The Effect of Information on Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Natural Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(1): 103-118.

Fornos, Carolina A., Timothy J. Power, and James C. Garand. 2004. "Explaining Voter Turnout in Latin America, 1980 to 2000." *Comparative Political Studies* 37(8): 909-940.

Kostadinova, Tatiana and Timothy J. Power. 2007. "Does Democratization Depress Participation? Voter Turnout in the Latin American and Eastern European Transitional Democracies." *Political Research Quarterly* 60(3): 363-377.

**Week 8 / Oct 15 / Sincere and Strategic Voting**

Tavits, Margit and Taavi Annus. 2006. "Learning to Make Votes Count: The Role of Democratic Experience." *Electoral Studies* 25(1): 72-90.

Blais, André, Richard Nadeau, Elisabeth Gidengil, and Neil Nevitte. 2001. "Measuring Strategic Voting in Multiparty Plurality Elections." *Electoral Studies* 20: 343-352.

Crisp, Brian F., Santiago Olivella, and Joshua D. Potter. 2012. "Electoral Contexts that Impede Voter Coordination." *Electoral Studies* 31(1): 143-158.

Rabinowitz, George and Stuart MacDonald. 1989. "A Directional Theory of Issue Voting." *American Political Science Review* 83(1): 93-121.

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): 87-119.

Carrubba, Cliff and Richard J. Timpone. 2005. "Explaining Vote Switching Across First- and Second-Order Elections." *Comparative Political Studies* 38(3): 260-281.

**Week 9 / Oct 22 / Economic and Retrospective Voting**

Przeworski, Adam, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin. 1999. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Roberts, Kenneth M. and Erik Wibbels. 1999. "Party Systems and Electoral Volatility in Latin America: A Test of Economic, Institutional, and Structural Explanations." *American Political Science Review* 93(3): 575-590.

Lewis-Beck, Michael S. and Mary Stegmaier. 2000. "Economic Determinants of Electoral Outcomes." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3: 183-219.

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

Anderson, Christopher J. 2000. "Economic Voting and Political Context: A Comparative Perspective." *Electoral Studies* 19(2-3): 151-170.

Anderson, Cameron D. 2006. "Economic Voting and Multilevel Governance: A Comparative Individual-Level Analysis." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 449-463.

Crisp, Brian F., Santiago Olivella, Joshua D. Potter, and William Mishler. 2013. "Elections as Instruments for Punishing Bad Representatives and Selecting Good Ones." *Electoral Studies* Published Online: 1-15.

**Week 10 / Oct 29 / Personal Vote-Seeking Incentives / Paper Draft Due**

Cain, Bruce E., John A. Ferejohn, and Morris P. Fiorina. 1984. "The Constituency Service Basis of the Personal Vote for U.S. Representatives and British Members of Parliament." *American Political Science Review* 78(1): 110-125.

Carey, John M. and Matthew Soberg Shugart. 1995. "Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank-Ordering of Electoral Formulas." *Electoral Studies*. 14(4): 417-439.

Carey, John M. 2007. "Competing Principals, Political Institutions, and Party Unity in Legislative Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 92-107.

Ames, Barry. 1995. "Electoral Strategy under Open-List Proportional Representation." *American Journal of Political Science* 39(2): 406-433.

Crisp, Brian F. and Scott W. Desposato. 2004. "Constituency Building in Multimember Districts: Collusion or Conflict?" *The Journal of Politics* 66(1): 136-156.

Samuels, David J. 2002. "Pork Barreling is Not Credit Claiming or Advertising: Campaign Finance and the Sources of the Personal Vote in Brazil." *The Journal of Politics* 64(3): 845-863.



## Week 11 / Nov 5 / Party Electoral Organization

- Cottner, Cornelius P., James L. Gibson, John F. Bibby, and Robert J. Huckshorn. 1989. *Party Organizations in American Politics*. University of Pittsburgh Press. Chapter 5.
- Katz, Richard S. and Peter Mair. 1995. "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party." *Party Politics* 1(1): 5-28.
- Scarrow, Susan. 1994. "The 'Paradox of Enrollment': Assessing the Costs and Benefits of Party Memberships." *European Journal of Political Research* 25(1): 41-60.
- van Biezen, Ingrid. 2003. *Political Parties in New Democracies: Party Organization in Southern and East-Central Europe*. Palgrave Press. Chapter 2.
- Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 11.
- Tavits, Margit. 2012. "Organizing for Success: Party Organizational Strength and Electoral Performance in Postcommunist Europe." *The Journal of Politics* 74(1): 83-97.
- Tavits, Margit. 2012. "Party Organizational Strength and Party Unity in Parliament in Post-Communist Europe." *European Political Science Review* 4(3): 409-431.

## Week 12 / Nov 12 / Comparative Electoral Finance / Peer Critiques Due

- McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2006. *Polarized America: The Dance of Ideology and Unequal Riches*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press. Chapter 5.
- Scarrow, Susan. 2007. "Political Finance in Comparative Perspective." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10:193-210.
- van Biezen, Ingrid and Petr Kopecký. 2007. "The State and the Parties: Public Funding, Public Regulation, and Rent-Seeking in Contemporary Democracies." *Party Politics* 13(2): 235-254.
- Potter, Joshua D. and Margit Tavits. 2013. "The Impact of Campaign Finance Laws on Party Competition." *British Journal of Political Science* Published Online: 1-23.
- Samuels, David. 2001. "Does Money Matter? Credible Commitments and Campaign Finance in New Democracies: Theory and Evidence from Brazil." *Comparative Politics* 34(1): 23-42.
- Roper, Steven D. 2002. "The Influence of Romanian Campaign Finance Laws on Party System Development and Corruption." *Party Politics* 8(2): 175-192.

**Week 13 / Nov 19 / Party System Nationalization**

Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 10.

Chhibber, Pradeep and Kenneth Kollman. 2004. *The Formation of National Party Systems: Federalism and Party Competition in Canada, Great Britain, India, and the United States*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 3.

Brancati, Dawn. 2008. "The Origins and Strength of Regional Parties." *British Journal of Political Science* 38(1): 135-159.

Jones, Mark P. and Scott Mainwaring. 2003. "The Nationalization of Parties and Party Systems: An Empirical Measure and an Application to the Americas." *Party Politics* 9(2): 139-166.

Morgenstern, Scott, Stephen M. Swindle, and Andrea Castagnola. 2009. "Party Nationalization and Institutions." *The Journal of Politics* 71(4): 1322-1341.

Crisp, Brian F., Santiago Olivella, and Joshua D. Potter. 2013. "Party System Nationalization and the Scope of Public Policy: The Importance of Cross-District Constituency Similarity." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(4): 431-456.

**Week 14 / Dec 3 / The Politics of Electoral Reform / Final Paper Due**

Benoit, Kenneth. 2007. "Electoral Laws as Political Consequences: Explaining the Origins and Change of Electoral Institutions." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10:363-390.

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.

Colomer, Josep. 2005. "It's Parties that Choose Electoral Systems (or Duverger's Law Upside Down)." *Political Studies* 53(1): 1-21.

Shvetsova, Olga. 2003. "Endogenous Selection of Institutions and Their Exogenous Effects." *Constitutional Political Economy* 14(3): 191-212.

Benoit, Kenneth and John W. Schiemann. 2001. "Institutional Choice in New Democracies: Bargaining Over Hungary's 1989 Electoral Law." *The Journal of Theoretical Politics* 13(2): 153-182.

Bowler, Shaun, Todd Donovan, and Jeffrey A. Karp. 2006. "Why Politicians Like Electoral Institutions: Self-Interest, Values or Ideology?" *The Journal of Politics* 68(2): 434-446.

Renwick, Alan. 2011. "Electoral Reform in Europe since 1945." *West European Politics* 34(3): 456-477.