

Analysis of Comparative Political Institutions and Democratic Representation

PLSC 497

Thomas Building 217

MoWeFr - 1:25-2:15pm

Instructor Information

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Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow

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Pond Lab 303

Office Hours: Monday 2:30-5:30 or by appointment

Course Description

Governments in democratic political systems are expected to implement policies that are congruent with the citizens' preferences. In this course, we examine how institutions shape the translation of the voters' preferences into policies. To this end, we develop skills to formulate hypotheses, to collect and analyze data, and to present our results. Some of the questions that we will study during the course are the following: What are the effects of different electoral rules on the availability of alternative candidates, and the voters' decisions? How do parties differ in terms of cohesiveness and party discipline? What are the determinants of coalition formation and survival, and the dynamics of policy-making by coalitions? How are economic policies influenced by electoral rules, federalism, and political polarization?

Requirements and Evaluation

Attendance - 10 points

You are expected to attend all classes and read the assigned material before coming to class. In order to evaluate attendance, I will give quizzes at the beginning of some classes. The quizzes will include questions regarding the reading assigned for that week as well as previous lectures. The two lowest quiz grades will be dropped.

Paper Reports - 25 points

You will write five reports on the required journal articles on the schedule. You can choose any five articles from the articles assigned on or after January 22. Each report is worth 5 points. I expect you to answer the following questions in your reports. These questions provide an outline for a research paper, and they will serve as a guide while you are reading the articles. The reports will be 1-3 double-spaced pages long (12 font, 1 inch margins) and paper copies are due at the class on the dates listed on the schedule. Late reports will not be accepted.

- What is the research question?
- How does the paper contribute to the existing literature?
- What are the hypotheses?
- How are the outcome and the explanatory variables measured?
- What is the unit of analysis?
- Which cases are included in the analysis? How generalizable are the findings?
- Which methods are used to analyze data? Do the authors control for alternative explanations?
- What are the substantive conclusions? Based on the analysis, are the conclusions convincing?
- What are the limitations of the study? What are your suggestions for future research?

Data Exercises - 45 points

Throughout the semester, I will assign you nine exercises that will involve hands-on data collection or analysis. I encourage you to ask questions during my office hours or during the class. In order to make sure that you get timely answers, please ask your questions about the exercises at least 24 hours before they are due. You can also collaborate on exercises; however, each student is expected to write his/her own answers. For some exercises, I may ask you to work in groups, in which case only one exercise will be submitted per group. Electronic copies of the exercises are due at 5pm on the dates listed on the schedule. Each

exercise is worth 5 points. Exercises that are submitted after 5pm will lose 1 point. Exercises submitted more than 48 hours late will not be accepted.

Data Analysis Portfolio- 20 points

As a final project, I will ask you to revise and resubmit the data exercises that you have submitted throughout the semester. The goal of the project is for you to respond to the feedback that you got for the exercises. The electronic copy of the final is due at 5pm on April 30.

Grading scale

Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade
≥ 94	A	≥ 83	B	≥ 70	C
≥ 90	A-	≥ 80	B-	≥ 60	D
≥ 87	B+	≥ 75	C+	< 60	F

Tentative Schedule

Week 1 - Democratic Responsiveness

January 10

Powell Jr., G. Bingham, 2004. "The Chain of Responsiveness." *Journal of Democracy* 15(4):91-96.

January 12

R Refresher

Week 2 - Democratic Responsiveness

January 15

Martin Luther King Day - No Class

January 17

Powell Jr., G. Bingham, 2004. "The Chain of Responsiveness." *Journal of Democracy* 15(4):97-105.

January 19

Descriptive Statistics

Week 3 - Voters' Preferences

January 22

Duch, Raymond M., and Randolph T. Stevenson. 2006. "Assessing the Magnitude of the Economic Vote Over Time and Across Nations." *British Journal of Political Science* 25: 528-47.

January 23

Data Exercise 1 Due

January 26

Data Visualization

Week 4 - Electoral Rules and The Number of Political Parties

January 29

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.

January 30

Data Exercise 2 Due

February 2

Unit of Analysis

Week 5 - Electoral Rules and Ideological Congruence

February 5

Golder, Matt, and Jacek Stramski. 2010. "Ideological Congruence and Electoral Institutions." *American Journal of Political Science* 54(1):90-106.

February 6

Data Exercise 3 Due

February 9

Causality and Research Design

Week 6 - Electoral Rules and Personal Vote-Seeking

February 12

Crisp, Brian, 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.

February 16

Causality and Research Design

Week 7 - Parliamentary Systems and Government Formation

February 19

Martin, Lanny W. and Randolph T. Stevenson. 2001. "Government Formation in Parliamentary Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 33-50.

February 20

Data Exercise 4 Due

February 23

Measurement

Week 8 - Presidential Systems

February 26

Pereira, Carlos, Timothy J. Power and Lucio Renno. 2005. "Under What Conditions Do Presidents Resort to Decree Power? Theory and Evidence from the Brazilian Case." *Journal of Politics* 67(1):178-200.

February 27

Data Exercise 5 Due

March 2

Data Collection

Week 9 - Spring Break

Week 10 - Presidentialism vs. Parliamentarism

March 12

Cheibub, Jose Antonio, Adam Przeworski and Sebastian M Saiegh. 2004. "Government Coalitions and Legislative Success under Presidentialism and Parliamentarism." *British Journal of Political Science* 34:565-587.

March 13

Data Exercise 6 Due

March 16

Inter-coder Reliability

Week 11 - Bicameralism

March 19

Heller, William B. 1997. "Bicameralism and Budget Deficits: The Effect of Parliamentary Structure on Government Spending." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*.

March 23

Data Analysis

Week 12 - Federalism

March 26

Wibbels, Erik. 2000. "Federalism and the Politics of Macroeconomic Policy and Performance." 44(4):687-702.

March 27

Data Exercise 7 Due

March 30

Data Analysis

Week 13 - Policy Consequences of Institutions

April 2

T. Iversen and D. Soskice. 2006. "Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More than Others." *American Political Science Review* 100:165-181.

April 6

No Class

Week 14 - Policy Consequences of Institutions

April 9

Boix, Carles. 2001. "Democracy, Development, and the Public Sector." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1):1-17.

April 10

Data Exercise 8 Due

April 13

Replication

Week 15 - Policy Consequences of Institutions

April 16

Hallerberg, Mark. 2004. "Executive Authority, the Personal Vote, and Budget Discipline in Latin American and Caribbean Countries." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(3): 571-587.

April 20

Replication

Week 16 - Accountability

April 23

Tavits, Margit. 2007. "Clarity of Responsibility and Corruption." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1):218-229.

April 24

Data Exercise 9 Due

April 27

Review

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

Disability Accommodation

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides contact information for every Penn State campus (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator>). For further information, please visit Student Disability Resources website (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/>).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: See documentation guidelines (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines>). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS)

<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>: 814-863-0395

Counseling and Psychological Services at Commonwealth Campuses

<http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses/>

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400

Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Educational Equity/Report Bias

Penn State University has adopted a "[Protocol for Responding to Bias Motivated Incidents](#)" that is grounded in the policy that the "University is committed to creating an educational environment which is free from intolerance directed toward individuals or groups and strives to create and maintain an environment that fosters respect for others." That policy is embedded within an institution traditionally committed to [academic freedom](#). Bias motivated

incidents include conduct that is defined in [University Policy AD 91: Discrimination and Harassment, and Related Inappropriate Conduct](#). Students, faculty, or staff who experience or witness a possible bias motivated incident are urged to report the incident immediately by doing one of the following:

* Submit a report via the Report Bias webpage <http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>

* Contact one of the following offices:

University Police Services, University Park: 814-863-1111

Multicultural Resource Center, Diversity Advocate for Students: 814-865-1773

Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity: 814-865-5906

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs: 814-865-0909

Affirmative Action Office: 814-863-0471

* Dialing 911 in cases where physical injury has occurred or is imminent