

PS389: COMPARATIVE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Fall 2007; Mon & Wed 4:00-5:30pm; 1449 Mason

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Office Hours: Tu 11:45-1:45 (Haven Hall 6658) & by Appt. (I.S.R. #4246)

DESCRIPTION: This course examines closely the major institutions of democracy—the electoral system (e.g., plurality, majority, and proportional-representation), the party and party system (i.e., intra-party organization and the configuration of inter-party competition), and the governmental system (e.g., parliamentary and presidential; federal and unitary). Our primary purpose is to explore and explain the consequences of variations across the developed democracies—empirically, roughly: North America, West Europe, Australasia, and Japan since World War II—in the institutions of representation and authority allocation—e.g., those that structure legislative and executive selection, legislative organization, executive-legislative and intra-governmental relations. We aim to consider and evaluate empirically how these institutional variations might relate to (and possibly cause) different patterns of and tendencies in policies and, through policy or directly, in outcomes that greatly affect people's lives like social order and strife, civic liberty and participation, and socio-economic performance. Our secondary purpose is to introduce modern social-science research in these topics, so we undertake our primary task by following closely one outstanding textbook structured on the modern design and understanding of the subject and a series of relatively recent, more research-oriented texts on some of the topics raised.

SCOPE & METHOD: In some senses, the countries we study are remarkably similar. All have secure and firmly democratic polities, relatively open market-based economies, and among the wealthiest, healthiest, and happiest citizens in the world. In other senses, however, they differ markedly. Some have elections where the realistic choice is between only two alternatives, while others present voters with a smorgasbord of alternative viewpoints. Some have a single, independent locus of executive and legislative power, while others locate power diffusely within the legislature and/or divide it between executives and legislatures. We exploit the similarities between countries to ensure that we are comparing (broadly) like with like, and then examine the remaining differences between them in terms of political structures and processes to uncover and explain variations in the patterns of political outcomes. The modern social-scientist has a research tool-kit for doing this that includes statistical empirical-analysis and mathematical theoretical-modeling. We will see some of each during the semester, so some understanding of these techniques is essential. However, to grasp what we cover in the class, at the level at which we cover it, basic numeracy and logical skills, plus our in-class instruction and discussion of the specific techniques encountered, will suffice. You will be interpreting statistical results and applying theoretical models generated by others, not necessarily generating such results yourself (although the latter is certainly permitted).

BOOKS:

GLM: Gallagher, Michael, Michael Laver, and Peter Mair. 2006. *Representative Government in Modern Europe: Institutions, Parties, and Governments*. 4th Edition. McGraw Hill.

AL: Lijphart, Arend. 1995. *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies, 1945-1990*. Oxford UP.

L&S: Laver, Michael and Kenneth Shepsle, 1996. *Making and Breaking Governments: Cabinets and Legislatures in Parliamentary Democracies*. Cambridge UP.

GBP: Powell, G. Bingham, Jr. 2000. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian & Proportional Visions*. Yale UP.

RJF: Franzese, Robert J., Jr. 2002. *Macroeconomic Policies of Developed Democracies*. Cambridge UP.

ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES, & EVALUATIONS:

Reading and Class Participation: This course is partly lecture-class and partly a seminar in which I expect all students to participate fully. The reading assignments are not long, but some of the materials are dense, technical, and/or advanced. Therefore, everyone is to have read all assigned reading before each class; in class, partly I will lecture, partly we will discuss the material and topics, and partly we will work together through the material (especially the more technically demanding readings). In many cases, lecture notes are or will be available on my web page to aide students. Given this structure, prepared attendance and constructive participation is mandatory (and notably weighted in grading: 25%). Your performance in this course will also be assessed in part by two exams, a midterm (35%) and a final (40%).

Prepared Attendance & Constructive Participation: 25%

Mid-term Examination: 35%

Final Exam: 40% (cumulative, Tuesday, December 18, 8:00-10:00am)

Wk	Day/Date		Topic and Readings
1	Wed	Sep-5	(CLASS CANCELLED. SYLLABUS AVAILABLE ON-LINE.)
2	Mon	Sep-10	<u>Introductory Overview of Comparative Politics:</u> Lane & Ersson, <i>Politics and Society in Western Europe</i> , 3rd ed. (Sage: 1994). Ch.1, pp. 15-51.
	Wed	Sep-12	<u>The Cycle of Democratic Politics & Policymaking:</u> RJF, Ch.1, pp.1-61.
3	Mon	Sep-17	<u>Institutions and the Science in Social Science:</u> Olson, Mancur. <i>The Rise and Decline of Nations</i> . (Yale: 1982). Chs. 1-3, pp.1-74. King, Keohane, Verba. <i>Designing Social Inquiry</i> . (Princeton: 1994). Ch.1, pp. 3-33.
	Wed	Sep-19	<u>Systems of Government:</u> GLM, Chs. 2-4, 6, pp. 24-114, 154-86.
4	Mon	Sep-24	<u>Electoral Systems:</u> GLM, Ch. 11, pp. 340-80. Lijphart, <i>Patterns of Democracy</i> . (Yale: 1999). Ch.8, pp. 143-70.
	Wed	Sep-26	<u>Electoral Systems:</u> AL, Chs.1-3, pp. 1-77.
5	Mon	Oct-1	<u>Electoral Systems:</u> AL, Chs. 4-5, pp. 78-117.
	Wed	Oct-3	<u>Electoral Systems:</u> AL, Chs. 5-7, pp. 95-152.
6	Mon	Oct-8	<u>Party Systems:</u> GLM, Chs. 7-8, pp. 187-262.
	Wed	Oct-10	<u>Party Systems:</u> GLM: Chs. 9-10, pp. 263-339.
7	Mon	Oct-15	<u>Study Break</u>
	Wed	Oct-17	<u>Mid-Term Exam</u> <u>Good Luck!</u>
8	Mon	Oct-22	<u>Mid-Term Exam: Review</u>
	Wed	Oct-24	<u>Government Formation & Dissolution:</u> Powell, <i>Contemporary Democracies</i> , Ch. 7.
9	Mon	Oct-29	<u>Government Formation & Dissolution:</u> GLM, Ch. 12, pp. 381-421. Lijphart, <i>Patterns of Democracy</i> . (Yale: 1999). Ch. 6, pp. 90-115.
	Wed	Oct-31	<u>Making & Breaking Governments:</u> L&S, Pt. I, pp. 1-60.
10	Mon	Nov-5	<u>Making & Breaking Governments:</u> L&S, Pt. II, pp. 61-124.
	Wed	Nov-7	<u>Making & Breaking Governments:</u> L&S, Pt. III, pp. 125-94.
11	Mon	Nov-12	<u>Democracy & Representation:</u> GBP, Chs. 1-3, pp. 3-68
	Wed	Nov-14	<u>Democracy & Representation:</u> GBP, Chs. 3-5, pp. 47-121
12	Mon	Nov-19	<u>Democracy & Representation:</u> GBP, Chs. 6-7, pp. 122-174
	Wed	Nov-21	<u>Happy Thanksgiving!</u>
13	Mon	Nov-26	<u>Democracy & Representation:</u> GBP, Chs. 8-10, pp. 175-254
	Wed	Nov-28	<u>Democracy, Policy & Outcomes:</u> RJF, Ch. 1-2, pp. 1-125.
14	Mon	Dec-3	<u>Democracy, Policy & Outcomes:</u> RJF, Ch. 2-3, pp. 62-195.
	Wed	Dec-5	<u>Democracy, Policy & Outcomes:</u> RJF, Ch. 3-4, pp. 126-255.
15	Mon	Dec-10	<u>Democracy, Policy & Outcomes:</u> RJF, Ch. 4-5, pp. 196-278.
	Wed	Dec-12	<u>Review</u>
16	Tue	Dec-18	<u>Final Exam:</u> Tuesday, December 18, 8:00-10:00am