

POSC363 Comparative Elections and Electoral Systems

Fall Semester 2015

MW 12:30-1:45pm

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COURSE OUTLINE AND REQUIREMENTS

Elections are a signature component of democratic political systems. Elections are also bids, by those who rule, for legitimacy, opportunities at regular (if infrequent) intervals to express political preferences through means regulated by the state (through law) and by political activists, associating in political parties that help to structure the choices presented to the electorate.

Elections present these organized choices to citizens, and permit citizens, as voters, to register preferences. Through elections for government offices, voters make choices among candidates; through national initiatives and local ballot issues, voters assert legislative preferences; through national referenda, voters confirm policy choices. In this course, we will examine how elections emphasize choice and participation, considering the means of citizen involvement in elections, and how elections structure citizen inclusion (or exclusion) in the electorate (through definitions of citizenship, through election law concerning sex, age, and residency, and voter registration and other requirements).

This course takes a comparative perspective, examining elections and electoral system differences across and within established democratic political systems, and discussing how preferred outcomes – and what those preferences are – can be shaped through the electoral process.

Evaluation of Student Performance. POSC363 is a SAGES departmental seminar. Hence, evaluation of student performance in this course is based on the following criteria. First, students will complete two short research papers, each of which is worth 15 percent of the student's course grade. A separate *Guidelines for Papers in POSC363* discusses the details of these papers. Each student will also have responsibility for presenting his or her research paper to the class on the report due date; presentation guidelines are provided in the *Guidelines for Papers*.

Second, students will complete a final research paper, based on the two previous papers, integrating additional materials and evidence, and stating a clear position in regard to major course research questions (see *Guidelines for Papers in POSC363* for details concerning the final paper). The final paper is worth 25 percent of the course grade. Each student will also have responsibility for presenting his or her final paper results to the class in the last two weeks of the semester. Presentation guidelines are provided in the *Guidelines for Papers*. The final paper presentation is worth 10 percent of the student's course grade.

The research papers and the final paper are based on a student's choice of a country and its electoral system; we will discuss and confirm these choices in class during the first two weeks of the semester.

Third, each student will have responsibility for facilitating discussion during one class meeting; the student facilitating discussion for the day will also submit a brief summary discussion report. Discussion facilitation is worth 10 percent, and the summary discussion report is worth 5 percent, of the student's course grade. Discussion facilitation is assigned by the professor, and *Guidelines for Discussion Facilitation and Report* are available on the course Blackboard site.

Fourth, each student is expected to attend class every day and to be prepared for each class meeting by having read, in advance, the materials assigned for that day. Students should be prepared to discuss the material in detail in class every day, and all students are expected to participate. Informed participation in class discussion is a requirement of the course accounts for an additional 10 percent of the final grade.

Finally, all students are expected to present themselves in class in a professional manner. Professionalism refers to adherence to standards of behavior and performance expected from political scientists. This includes, but is not limited to, courteous behavior in class; attention to other speakers; engagement with the work at hand; and, of course, adherence to university standards of academic integrity (see below). Students are expected, and obliged, to comport themselves, in class, in a professional manner. Professionalism is a requirement of the course, and accounts for the remaining 10 percent of the final course grade.

Note that students are required to attend all classes and to complete all course assignments.

SCHEDULE OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Final Grade
Research Paper #1	September 28.	15%
Research Paper #1 Oral Report	September 28.	--
Research Paper #2	October 21.	15%
Research Paper #2 Oral Report	October 21.	--
Final Research Paper Presentation	As assigned (November 25, 30).	10%
Final Research Paper	December 15, by noon.	25%

Discussion Facilitation	As assigned.	10%
Discussion Report	As assigned.	5%
Participation	Throughout semester.	10%
Professionalism	Throughout semester.	10%

Three books are required for this course, listed below; they are available for purchase in the University Barnes and Noble Bookstore (and elsewhere):

David Farrell. 2011. *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction*

Pippa Norris. 2004. *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Electoral Behavior*

Pippa Norris, Richard W. Frank, and Ferran Martinez i Coma, eds. 2015. *Contentious Elections: From Ballots to Barricades*.

Additional readings support the required books; these are extensive and provide a deeper understanding and analysis of comparative elections and electoral systems. Additional readings are identified in the Schedule of Readings and Assignments, below, and are available on the course Blackboard site. Students are encouraged to read a daily national or international newspaper (e.g. the *Financial Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*).

There are also several excellent political science sites and blogs that include a focus on comparative elections and electoral systems, such as Fruits and Votes (<https://fruitsandvotes.wordpress.com/>), the Center for Elections and Democracy (<http://www.fairvote.org/research-and-analysis/elections-worldwide/>), the Political Party Database Working Group (<http://www.politicalpartydb.org/useful-links/>), and the Leibniz Institute for Social Science (<http://www.gesis.org/das-institut/kompetenzzentren/european-data-laboratory/data-resources/data-for-comparative-research/>). In addition to these, please refer to the *Research Resources* list, provided on the course Blackboard site.

Standards of professionalism and academic integrity are integral components of this course. Students are reminded that they are obliged to understand, to uphold, and to comply with the Academic Integrity Policy of the University. A copy of the Code may be found online at <http://students.case.edu/groups/aiboard/policy.html>. Students who do not understand the Academic Integrity Policy after having read it should make an appointment to see me to discuss it; indeed, I welcome this discussion and encourage students to see me in advance of any assignment about which they have doubts or questions. It is a course requirement that students read the University's Academic Integrity Policy.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

August 24 **Introduction to the Course**

August 26 **Why Elections? What Do We Want Elections to Achieve?**

READ: Pippa Norris, *Electoral Engineering*, Chapter 1; David Farrell, *Electoral Systems*, Chapter 1

August 31 **Who Gets to Vote? Defining the Electorate**

READ: Jill Lepore, “Rock, paper, scissors: How we used to vote.” *The New Yorker*, October 13, 2008 [<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/10/13/rock-paper-scissors>]

September 2 **Age, Race, and Felon Status: Who Should Vote?**

READ: Tak Wing Chan and Matthew Clayton, “Should the Voting Age be Lowered to Sixteen? Normative and Empirical Considerations,” *Political Studies*, 54 2006: 533-558; Christopher Uggen and Jeff Manza, “Democratic Contraction? Political Consequences of Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States,” *American Sociological Review*, 67 (6), December 2002: 777-803 [both available on Blackboard]; and *Shaw v. Reno* (1993) [<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/509/630/>].

DISCUSSION AND CONFIRMATION OF COUNTRY CHOICES

September 7 **LABOR DAY; NO CLASSES**

September 9 **CLASS CANCELLED: Professor at Workshop in the United Kingdom**

September 14 **How Are Votes Cast? Ballot Structure and Voting Technology**

READ: Chris Bonneau and Eric Loepf, “Getting Things Straight: The Effects of Ballot Design and Electoral Structure on Voter Participation,” *Electoral Studies*, 34 (2014): 119-130 [available on Blackboard].

September 16 **READ: Eric Chen, Gábor Simonovits, Jon A. Krosnick, and Josh Pasek, “The Impact of Candidate Name Order on Election Outcomes in North Dakota,” *Electoral Studies*, 35 (2014): 115-122 [available on Blackboard].**

September 21 **How Are Votes Counted?**

READ: Adrian Blau, "The Effective Number of Parties at Four Scales: Votes, Seats, Legislative Power and Cabinet Power," *Party Politics*, 14 (2), 2008: 167-187 [available on Blackboard].

September 23 CLASS CANCELLED: Professor lecturing at Rice University

September 28 FIRST REPORT DUE FOR PRESENTATION IN CLASS

September 30 **Electoral Systems**

READ: Simon Hix, Ron Johnston and Iain McLean, with research assistance from Angela Cummine, *Choosing an Electoral System* [available on Blackboard]

October 5 **How Are Winners Identified? Converting Votes to Seats**

READ: David M. Farrell, *Electoral Systems*, Chapters 2 and 3

October 7 READ: David M. Farrell, *Electoral Systems*, Chapters 4, 5, and 6

October 12 **Electoral Systems and Party Systems**

READ: Pippa Norris, *Electoral Engineering*, Chapters 4 and 5

October 14 READ: Pippa Norris, *Electoral Engineering*, Chapters 6 and 7

October 19 FALL BREAK

October 21 SECOND REPORT DUE FOR PRESENTATION IN CLASS

October 26 **Electoral Systems and Their Outcomes: Descriptive Representation**

READ: Pippa Norris, *Electoral Engineering*, Chapter 8: "Women's Representation;" and Andrew Reynolds, "Reserved Seats in National Legislatures: A Research Note," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 30 (May 2005): 301-10 [available on Blackboard].

October 28 READ: Andrew Roberts, Jason Seawright, and Jennifer Cyr, “Do Electoral Laws Affect Women’s Representation,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 46 (12), December 2013: 1555-1581; and Mona Lena Krook and Diana Z. O’Brien, “The Politics of Group Representation: Quotas for Women and Minorities Worldwide,” *Comparative Politics*, 42 (3), 2010: 253-272 [both available on Blackboard].

November 2 READ: Pippa Norris, *Electoral Engineering*, Chapter 9: “Ethnic Minorities;” and Mala Htun, “Is Gender like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups,” *Perspectives on Politics*, 2 (3), 2004: 439-458 [available on Blackboard].

November 3 ELECTION DAY

November 4 READ: Karen Bird, “Ethnic Quotas and Ethnic Representation Worldwide.” *International Political Science Review*, 35 (1), 2014: 12-26; and David Lublin and Matthew Wright, “Engineering Inclusion: Assessing the Effects of Pro-minority Representation Policies,” *Electoral Studies*, 32 (4), 2013: 746-755 [both available on Blackboard].

November 9 **Other Elections: Referenda, Initiatives, and Recalls**

READ: Lawrence LeDuc, “Referendums and Deliberative Democracy,” *Electoral Studies*, 38 (February) 2015: 139-148; and Carlos Closa, “Why Convene Referendums? Explaining Choices in EU Constitutional Politics,” *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14 (8), 2007: 1311-1332 [both available on Blackboard].

November 11 READ: Andreas R.T. Schuck and Claes H. de Vreese, “Public Support for Referendums in Europe: A Cross-national Comparison in 21 Countries,” *Electoral Studies*, 38 (February) 2015: 149-158 [available on Blackboard]; and Katherine Collin, “Do Referendums Resolve or Perpetuate Contention?” in *Contentious Elections: From Ballots to Barricades*, eds. Pippa Norris, Richard W. Frank, and Ferran Martinez i Coma. New York: Routledge, 2015.

November 16 **Electoral Corruption, Election Violence**

READ: Pippa Norris, Richard W. Frank, and Ferran Martinez i Coma, “Contentious Elections: From Votes to Violence,” and Alesia Sedziaka and Richard Rose, “Do Contentious Elections Catalyze Mass Protests?,” both in *Contentious Elections: From Ballots to Barricades*, eds. Pippa Norris, Richard W. Frank, and Ferran Martinez i Coma. New York: Routledge, 2015.

November 18 READ: Jana Kunicova and Susan Rose-Ackerman, “Electoral Rules and Constitutional Structures as Constraints on Corruption,” *British Journal of Political Science* 35 (2005): 573-606 [available on Blackboard].

November 23 READ: Masaaki Higashikjima, “Do Contentious Elections Overthrow Leaders,” Patrick M. Kuhn, “Do Contentious Elections Trigger Violence,” and Pippa Norris, Richard W. Frank, and Ferran Martinez i Coma, “The Risks of Contentious Elections,” in *Contentious Elections: From Ballots to Barricades*, eds. Pippa Norris, Richard W. Frank, and Ferran Martinez i Coma. New York: Routledge, 2015.

November 25 **Final Paper Presentations**

November 30 **Final Paper Presentations**

December 2 **Conclusion of the Course**

FINAL PAPER DUE: DECEMBER 15, BY NOON