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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper #1</td>
<td>September 28.</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper #2</td>
<td>October 21.</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Paper Presentation</td>
<td>As assigned (November 25, 30).</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Paper</td>
<td>December 15, by noon.</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Facilitation</td>
<td>As assigned.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Report</td>
<td>As assigned.</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Throughout semester.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Throughout semester.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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


**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*).


**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](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?**


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


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


DISCUSSION AND CONFIRMATION OF COUNTRY CHOICES

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September 7  **LABOR DAY; NO CLASSES**

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

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


September 21  **How Are Votes Counted?**


September 23  CLASS CANCELLED: Professor lecturing at Rice University

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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]

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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

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October 12  **Electoral Systems and Party Systems**


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

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October 19  FALL BREAK

October 21  SECOND REPORT DUE FOR PRESENTATION IN CLASS

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


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November 3  ELECTION DAY


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


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November 16  **Electoral Corruption, Election Violence**


November 25  **Final Paper Presentations**

November 30  **Final Paper Presentations**

December 2  **Conclusion of the Course**

**FINAL PAPER DUE: DECEMBER 15, BY NOON**

FINAL PAPER DUE: DECEMBER 15, BY NOON