

## **POSC363 The Politics of Electoral Systems**

Spring Semester 2022

TTh 1:00-2:15pm

Clark Hall 205

**Karen Beckwith, Professor**

Office: 223 Mather House

Phone: 216.368.4129

E-mail: karen.beckwith@case.edu

Office Hours: by zoom MW 2:30-3:30pm, or by appointment

Professor Website: <http://politicalscience.case.edu/people/karen-beckwith/>

### **COURSE OUTLINE AND REQUIREMENTS**

“Modern democracy depends on the existence of political parties.”

– Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, 2016

“While you can have elections without democracy, you cannot have democracy without elections.”

– Michael Bratton, 1998

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 for citizens 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 democratic political systems, and discussing how preferred outcomes – and what those preferences are – can be shaped within and outside the electoral process.

The course also focuses on political party systems and how they change (or stay the same). Established democracies in West Europe and the (relatively new) states in Central Europe transitioning to democracy (or not) face challenges to their established party systems from new political parties, as major parties of the left and right are losing vote share. The course will address different types of political parties, including populist parties, nationalist parties, Green parties, and minor parties, with special attention to elections and electoral systems in North America and West Europe.

**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 20 percent of the student’s course grade. A separate *Guidelines for Short Research Papers*, posted on Canvas, discusses the details of these 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 Final Research Papers* for details concerning the final paper, available on the course Canvas site). 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 Final Paper Presentations*, available on the course Canvas site. 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; *Guidelines for Discussion Facilitation and Report* are available on the course Canvas site.

Finally, 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, including media reports relevant to the course, and all students are expected to participate. Students are expected, and obliged, to comport 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 attention to other speakers; engagement with the work at hand; being visible to your classmates and professor; and, of course, adherence to university standards of academic integrity. Informed class participation and professionalism are requirements of the course, and account for 10 percent of the final course grade.

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

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

Bonnie Meguid. 2010. *Party Competition between Unequals: Strategies and Electoral Fortunes in Western Europe* [electronic version online at Kelvin Smith Library]

Robert G. Moser and Ethan Scheiner. 2012. *Electoral Systems and Political Context: How the Effects of Rules Vary across New and Established Democracies* [electronic version online at Kelvin Smith Library]

**Also recommended (but not required) are:**

David Farrell. 2010. *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction*. Palgrave.

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

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

**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 Canvas 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 the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (<http://www.cses.org/>), Fruits and Votes (<https://fruitsandvotes.wordpress.com/>), the Center for Elections and Democracy (<http://www.fairvote.org/research-and-analysis/elections-worldwide/>), the Electoral Law Depository (<http://www.electorallaw.org/>), the Political Party Database Working Group (<https://www.politicalpartydb.org/about>), the Electoral Integrity Project (<https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com/>), International IDEA (<https://www.idea.int/about-us>), ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (<http://aceproject.org/about-en>), the PARLINE Database of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (<https://www.ipu.org/>), and Election Passport (<http://www.electionpassport.com/electoral-systems/>). In addition to these, please refer to the *Research Resources* list, provided on the course Canvas 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 <https://bulletin.case.edu/undergraduatestudies/academicintegrity/>. 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.

Students are not to record or to photograph class sessions, or to share recordings of class sessions with others; this course requirement honors and protects the privacy of rigorous in-class discussion. Students are reminded that they are obliged by the University to understand and to comply with the [CWRU Community Commitment](#).

### SCHEDULE OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Final Grade
Country Choice Identified	January 25	--
Research Paper #1	February 15	20%
Research Paper #2	March 28	20%
Final Research Paper Presentation	As assigned (April 14, 19, 21).	10%
Final Research Paper	April 28, 11:00am	25%
Discussion Facilitation	As assigned.	10%
Discussion Report	As assigned.	5%
Participation and Professionalism	Throughout semester.	10%

### SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

January 11      **Introduction to the Course**

READ: Adrian Blanco, Kevin Schaul, and Ashlyn Still, “How Redistricting Is Shaping the 2022 US House Map,” *Washington Post*, December 29, 2021;  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/interactive/redistricting-tracker-map/?itid=hp\\_politics](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/interactive/redistricting-tracker-map/?itid=hp_politics).

January 13      **Why Elections? What Do We Want Elections to Achieve?**

READ: [Voting Laws Roundup](#): December 2021; and “[The Public Squared: A Fairer Way to Vote](#),” *The Economist*, December 18, 2021.

RECOMMENDED: Pippa Norris, “Do Rules Matter? Structure versus Culture,” *Electoral Engineering* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) [available on Canvas]

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January 18      **Who Should Vote? Defining the Electorate**

READ: Moser and Scheiner, *Electoral Systems and Political Context*, Introduction and Chapter 1

January 20      READ: Moser and Scheiner, *Electoral Systems and Political Context*, Chapter 2; Haakon Gjerløw and Magnus B. Rasmussen, “Revolutions, Elite Fear, and Electoral Institutions,” *Comparative Politics*, forthcoming 2022 [available on Canvas]

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January 25      READ: Moser and Scheiner, *Electoral Systems and Political Context*, Chapters 3 and 4

January 27      READ: Moser and Scheiner, *Electoral Systems and Political Context*, Chapters 5 and 6

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February 1      **Engineering Inclusion: Ethnicity and Sex**

READ: Moser and Scheiner, *Electoral Systems and Political Context*, Chapter 7; Mala Htun, “Is Gender like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups,” *Perspectives on Politics*, 2 (3): 739-758.

RECOMMENDED: David Lublin and Matthew Wright, “Engineering Inclusion: Assessing the Effects of Pro-Minority Representation Policies,” *Electoral Studies*, 32 (4), 2013: 746-755.

February 3      READ: Moser and Scheiner, *Electoral Systems and Political Context*, Chapter 8; Sona Golder et al., “Votes for Women: Electoral Systems and Support for Female Candidates,” *Politics & Gender*, 13, 2015: 107-131; and Øyvind Sørass Skorge, “Mobilizing the Underrepresented: Electoral Systems and Gender Inequality in Political Participation,” *American Journal of Political Science*, forthcoming 2022 [available on Canvas]

RECOMMENDED: Mona Lena Krook and Leslie Schwindt-Bayer, “Electoral Institutions,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, eds. Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. 554-578 [available on Canvas]

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February 8      READ: 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; and Yann P. Kerevel, Austin S. Matthews, and Katsunori Seki, “Mixed-member Electoral Systems, Best Loser Rules, and the Descriptive Representation of Women,” *Electoral Studies*, 57 (2019): 153-162.

February 10      READ: Moser and Scheiner, *Electoral Systems and Political Context*, Chapter 9

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February 15      **Who Should Vote? Defining the Electorate**

READ: Ruth Dassonneville, Marc Hooghe, and Peter Miller, “The impact of compulsory voting

on inequality and the quality of the vote,” *West European Politics*, 40 (3), 2016: 621-644.

#### FIRST PAPER DUE IN CLASS

February 17     READ: Ian McAllister, “The politics of lowering the voting age in Australia: Evaluating the evidence,” *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 49 (1), 2014: 68-83; Philip Cook, “Against a Minimum Voting Age,” *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 16 (3), 2013: 439-358; and Jan Eichhorn and Johannes Bergh, “Lowering the Voting Age to 16 in Practice: Processes and Outcomes Compared,” *Parliamentary Affairs*, 74 (3), 2021: 507-521.

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February 22     READ: Gary W. Cox, “Electoral Rules, Mobilization, and Turnout,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 18, 2015: 49-68.

February 24     **How to Vote: Ballot Structure**

READ: Andrew Reynolds and Marco Steenbergen, “How the world votes: The political consequences of ballot design, innovation and manipulation,” *Electoral Studies*, 25, 2006: 570-598.

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March 1         READ: Nicholas D. Bernardo Jr., Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz, and Gretchen A. Macht, “The Effect of Ballot Characteristics on the Likelihood of Voting Errors,” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, 2021: 1-19; Kamil Marcinkiewicz and Mary Stegmaier, “Ballot Position Effects Under Compulsory and Optional Preferential-List PR Electoral Systems,” *Political Behavior*, 37, 2015: 465-486; and Christine Fauvelle-Aymar and Michael S. Lewis-Beck, “TR versus PR: Effects of the French double ballot,” *Electoral Studies*, 27, 2008: 400-406.

March 3         DISCUSSION

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March 7-11     SPRING BREAK

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March 15        **Niche Parties and Small Party Challenges to Party Systems**

READ: Meguid, *Party Competition between Unequals*, Chapters 1 and 2

March 17        READ: Meguid, *Party Competition between Unequals*, Chapters 3, and Chapter 5 on the UK Green Party

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March 22        READ: Meguid, *Party Competition between Unequals*, Chapter 7, on the Scottish National Party

March 24      **Populist Parties and Nationalist Parties**

READ: Steven Wolinetz, “Populist Parties and the Changing Contours of European Party Systems,” in *Absorbing the Blow: Populist Parties and Their Impact on Parties and Party Systems*, eds. Steven Wolinetz and Andrej Zaslove. London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield. Pp. 275-319 [available on Canvas].

March 28      SECOND RESEARCH PAPER DUE BY EMAIL

March 29      READ: Gilles Ivaldi, “No Longer a Pariah? The Front National and the French Party System,” In *Absorbing the Blow: Populist Parties and Their Impact on Parties and Party Systems*, eds. Steven Wolinetz and Andrej Zaslove. London and New York: Rowman and Littlefield. Pp. 171-196 [available on Canvas]; and Meguid, *Party Competition between Unequals*, Chapter 6, “French Mainstream Party Strategies and the Success of the Front National”

March 31      READ: Alessandro Chiaramonte and Vincenzo Emanuele, “Party system volatility, regeneration and de-institutionalization in Western Europe (1945–2015),” *Party Politics*, 23 (4), 2015: 376-388.

April 5      READ: Alessandro Chiaramonte and Vincenzo Emanuele, “A growing impact of new parties: Myth or reality? Party system innovation in Western Europe after 1945,” *Party Politics*, 24 (5), 2018: 475-487.

April 7      CLASS CANCELED; PROFESSOR ATTENDING MIDWEST POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

April 12      CLASS CANCELED; PROFESSOR ATTENDING POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

April 14      **Final Paper Presentations #1**

April 19      **Final Paper Presentations #2**

April 21      **Final Paper Presentations #3**

April 27      **Conclusion of the Course**

**FINAL PAPER DUE ON THURSDAY, APRIL 28, BY 11:00AM**