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. The course will give special attention to the 2019 elections in Austria, Canada, India, Spain, and the United Kingdom.
Evaluation of Student Performance. Evaluation of graduate student performance in this course is based on the following criteria. First, 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.

Second, 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.

Third, each student will have responsibility for facilitating discussion during two class meetings; the student facilitating discussion for the day will also submit a brief summary discussion report. Each discussion facilitation is worth 10 percent, and the each 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.

Fourth, graduate students will develop and complete a research paper, involving the following components:

1. a research question concerning elections;
2. a research design paper, focusing on a single country’s electoral system;
3. identification (or construction) of a data set for testing the research question; and
4. a research paper presenting and analyzing findings.

Details of the research paper and a schedule of work will be developed in discussion with the professor. The research paper is worth 60 percent of the student’s final grade.

Finally, graduate students will present the completed research paper to the class on an agreed-upon date; presentation guidelines are provided in the Guidelines for Final Paper Presentations. The Guidelines are available on the course Canvas site. The final research paper presentation is worth 10 percent of the student’s final grade.

Note that students are required to attend all classes and to complete all course assignments.
The following books are suggested for this course, listed below:


(Electronic version online at Kelvin Smith Library;  
[http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook?sid=b946f4b6-57dc-4e6d-a245-57242566be0c%40sdc-v-sessmgr03&vid=0&format=EB](http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook?sid=b946f4b6-57dc-4e6d-a245-57242566be0c%40sdc-v-sessmgr03&vid=0&format=EB)  
Bonnie Meguid. 2010. *Party Competition between Unequals: Strategies and Electoral Fortunes in Western Europe* [electronic version online at Kelvin Smith Library;  
[http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook?sid=b946f4b6-57dc-4e6d-a245-57242566be0c%40sdc-v-sessmgr03&vid=0&format=EB](http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook?sid=b946f4b6-57dc-4e6d-a245-57242566be0c%40sdc-v-sessmgr03&vid=0&format=EB)]

Yonatan L. Morse. 2018. *How Autocrats Compete*  
Pippa Norris, Richard W. Frank, and Ferran Martinez i Coma, eds. 2015. *Contentious Elections: From Ballots to Barricades*  

Additional readings support these 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*).

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://community.case.edu/aib/full-academic-integrity-policy/. 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

January 13  Introduction to the Course

January 15  Why Elections? What Do We Want Elections to Achieve?

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

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January 20  Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday; no class meeting.

January 22  Who Should Vote? Defining the Electorate


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January 27  How Are Votes Cast? Ballot Structure and Voting Technology


DISCUSSION AND CONFIRMATION OF COUNTRY CHOICES DUE IN CLASS


February 3  How Are Votes Counted?


February 5  Electoral Systems

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

February 10  How Are Winners Identified? Converting Votes to Seats

READ: David M. Farrell, *Electoral Systems*, Chapters 2, 3, and 4


February 17  FIRST RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN CLASS

ORAL PRESENTATIONS: SESSION #1

February 19  ORAL PRESENTATIONS: SESSION #2
February 24  Electoral Systems, Party Systems, and Party Types


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March 9, 11  SPRING BREAK

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March 16  Niche Parties and Small Party Challenges to Party Systems

READ: Meguid, *Party Competition between Unequals*, Chapters 1-4

March 18  READ: Meguid, *Party Competition between Unequals*, Chapters 5-6

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March 23  SECOND RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN CLASS

ORAL PRESENTATIONS: SESSION #1
March 25  ORAL PRESENTATIONS: SESSION #2

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March 30  READ: Meguid, *Party Competition between Unequals*, Chapters 7 and 8

April 1  READ: Meguid, *Party Competition between Unequals*, Chapter 9,

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April 5-8  CLASS MEETINGS CANCELED: PROFESSOR ATTENDING THE POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

April 6  **Electoral Systems and Their Outcomes: Descriptive Representation**


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April 18  **Suffrage Symposium**


April 20  **Final Paper Presentations**

April 22  **Final Paper Presentations**

April 27  **Conclusion of the Course**

FINAL PAPER DUE ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, BY 11:00AM