

**COMPARATIVE POLITICS CAPSTONE:
THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION
Political Science 1381
University of Pittsburgh • Fall 2018
Wed 9.30am-12pm • 4801 Wesley W Posvar Hall**

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Office Hours: Wed 8.30am-9.30am, Wed 12.00pm-1.00pm or by appointment

Course Description

The main aim of this course is to discuss several central aspects of democratic politics and to link them to democratic theory. The central theme of the course will be whether the preferences of citizens are reflected in policy-making. A comparative approach is adopted: attention will be paid to how differences in institutional settings shape two basic issues. Namely, the correspondence between preferences and policies, and the way politicians are held accountable. Being the central mechanism citizens can count on to influence policy, elections will receive particular attention: whether they are free and fair, how citizens use the ballot to adapt to institutional settings and how they may discipline politicians in office.

Course objectives:

The objective of the course is threefold: First, to understand key concepts associated with democratic representation: selection, responsiveness, accountability, responsibility. Second, to be able to apply these concepts to specific settings and to evaluate whether they hold empirically or not. Third, and last, to be able to evaluate the merits and the flaws of empirical research that has been conducted around these concepts.

Course requirements

This is a small class, so please come to class having read the material and prepared to participate. Make sure to review the discussion questions before class. There will be lots of opportunities to engage with

the material and with each other. If you do not do so, this will ultimately impact your participation grade.

Texts assigned for each week will be available on CourseWeb.

Course evaluation

In-class participation: 10%

Discussion leader: 10%

Critical assessment of the readings: 40%

Final paper, draft, and in-class presentation: 40%

1. **Final paper, draft of the paper, and in-class presentation:** Each student will write a 15 page research paper on a topic of your choice related to the political economy of representation in democracies. The paper is due **December 12th** at noon. Beforehand, the student will submit a **7-page draft** of the paper. This is due **November 28th**. The draft is not graded, but a fellow student will give you written feedback on it by **December 5th** (feedback consists of a couple of paragraphs of major comments about the draft). In addition, either on November 28th or December 5th, each student will present her/his paper using presentation software, such as PowerPoint. The paper and presentation combined are 40% of your final grade; the presentation is 10% of this.
2. **Critical assessment of the readings:** On the first day, each student will sign up for **three weeks** to write reading summaries. Each summary will be up to 4 pages (double-spaced, 11 or 12-pt font, 1-inch margins on all sides). For your summary, you will distill the main arguments of each of the assigned readings and discuss the main limitations of the research therein. You should think about and focus on what the overall argument is of the readings or chapters and how they relate to each other (where applicable). I would suggest not signing up for back-to-back weeks, so that you can get feedback on your first summary before writing the second. The reading summaries are **due in class** for the weeks you have selected. The reading summaries will be graded both on substance and writing style. These critical assessments are worth 40% of your final grade.
3. **Discussion leader:** For one of the weeks you have selected to write a reading summary, you will serve as discussion leader. Two students may need to sign-up for a given week, which we will determine the first day of class. As discussion leader, you will **write-up 5-7 questions**

based on the readings that you will circulate to the class. These are meant to be open- ended questions that provoke discussion. These are due **Tuesday at 3pm** posted on the Discussion Board on CourseWeb. Your grade will be based on both the quality of the questions and how well you have facilitated discussion and will be 10% of your final grade. Whenever you are not serving as discussion leader, you should make sure to review the questions and come to class prepared to discuss them.

4. **Participation:** You are required to come to class prepared having read the assigned readings. Participation will be 10% of your final grade.

CLASS POLICIES

Laptops and other electronics:

Research has consistently shown that the use of laptops and other electronic devices negatively impacts student performance, both for the student who is using the device and those around her/him.

Nevertheless, you may still use your laptop, but if you are using it **you must seat in the back of the classroom**. Please turn your phone off while you are in class and do not text, check Facebook, Twitter, or look up information that is not relevant to class. **If you plan to come to class to do something else, I suggest that you not come.** Please make sure to bring the readings with you to class (either in hard copy or on an electronic device).

Email:

Please make sure you check your Pitt email regularly. If you do not use your Pitt account, make sure you link your Pitt account to whichever email address you do use. I will send email messages to the class periodically and will use your official Pitt email address. If you want to contact me, please use my Pitt addresses above.

Courseweb:

All materials handed out in class will be posted here. We will also post announcements, links, graphs/tables shown in class, and other useful information. So, check CourseWeb often!

Extensions and Alternate dates

In general, I will not allow extensions on assignments or alternate exam dates. However, should you find yourself in a situation where you will not be able to turn an assignment in on-time or be present for an exam, please discuss this with your me as soon as you can, and not the day the assignment is due or the day of the exam or afterwards.

Late Policy

A late assignment will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day it is late. After 1 week, it will no longer be accepted.

Grade appeals:

Should you want to appeal a grade you've received, it must be in writing. You will need to explain why you believe you deserve a grade that is different than the one you received. The written appeal should be turned in to me and I will then schedule a time to meet with you to discuss your appeal.

Academic Integrity:

Students in this course are expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated by the instructor, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. More information and the complete policy can be found at <http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html>.

Accommodations:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both me and the Office of Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412-648-7890, 412-228-5347 for P3 ASL users), drsrecp@pitt.edu, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, please see <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/>

Classroom recording:

To ensure free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance permission of the instructor. Any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

Turnitin:

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity to TurnItIn.com for the detection of plagiarism. TurnItIn.com will be used solely for the detection of plagiarism in papers.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 – August 29th - Introduction and preliminaries

Adam Przeworski, Susan Stokes, Bernard Manin (eds). 1999. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

FIRST PART OF THE COURSE: SELECTION of POLITICIANS

Week 2 – September 5th - Do campaigns help voters select like-minded politicians?

Elections offer the possibility of choosing representatives. This week examines the spatial model approach to elections, which posits that voters select the candidates or political parties with the most similar policy position or ideology. We then evaluate whether election campaigns provide voters with valuable information about the policy position of the contenders in the election.

Pablo Fernandez-Vazquez. 2017. The Credibility of Party Policy Rhetoric: Survey- Experimental Evidence. Unpublished manuscript.

Michael Tomz and Robert Van Houweling. 2009. The Electoral Implications of Candidate Ambiguity. *American Political Science Review* 103(1): 83-98.

Week 3 – September 12th - Party Actions as Source of Information

If campaigns are poor sources of information about political parties, how can citizens learn about the ideology of political parties? That is the question that we address in this session.

James Adams, Luca Bernardi, and Christopher Wlezien. 2018. Social Welfare Policy Outputs and Governing Parties' Left-Right Images: Do Voters Respond? Paper presented for the Voter Perceptions of Party Policy Positions workshop at the University of Texas at Austin, April 24, 2017.

Noam Lupu. 2014. Brand Dilution and the Breakdown of Political Parties in Latin America. *World Politics* 66(2): 561-602.

Week 4 – September 19th – Clientelism and Patronage

This week examines clientelism as a mechanism to select politicians that does not rely on policy-based appeals.

Susan Stokes. 2005. Perverse Accountability: A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence from Argentina. *American Political Science Review* 99(3):315-325

Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro. 2012. What Wins Votes: Why Some Politicians Opt Out of Clientelism. *American Journal of Political Science* 56(3): 568-583.

SECOND PART OF THE COURSE: RESPONSIVENESS

Week 5 – September 26th - Money and Politics

A key factor that determines who politicians are responsive to is the access of interest groups to lobbying, campaign finance, and the use of the revolving door. This week we examine these three key components of the link between money and politics.

Joshua L. Kalla and David E. Broockman. 2016. Campaign Contributions Facilitate Access to Congressional Officials: A Randomized Field Experiment. *American Journal of Political Science* 60(3): 545-558

Simon Weschle. 2017. How Permissive Campaign Finance Laws Slow Down the Revolving Door: Evidence from Citizens United. Unpublished manuscript, Syracuse University.

Week 6 – October 3rd – Descriptive Representation

When members of traditionally underrepresented groups access positions of political power the presence, how does this affect the responsiveness of institutions to these underrepresented groups? This is the question we examine in this session.

Simon Chauchard. 2014. “Can Descriptive Representation Change Beliefs about a Stigmatized Group? Evidence from Rural India”. *American Political Science Review*, 108(2): 403-422

Raghavendra Chattopadhyay and Esther Duflo. 2004. “Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India”. *Econometrica*, 72(5): 1409-1443.

Week 7 – October 10th – Political Influence

This week we examine the influence of social groups and classes on policy-making.

Larry Bartels, Benjamin I. Page, and Jason Seawright. 2013. “Democracy and the Policy Preferences of Wealthy Americans”. *Perspectives on Politics* 11(1): 51-73.

Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page. 2014. “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens”. *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3):564-581.

THIRD PART OF THE COURSE: ACCOUNTABILITY

Week 8 – October 17th – Accountability and Clarity of Responsibility

To hold politicians accountable for their actions it must be possible to assign credit and blame for political outcomes. This week we examine the theory of “Clarity of Responsibility” and discuss empirical evidence of how clarity of responsibility (and lack thereof) affect both economic and corruption voting.

G. Bingham Powell and Guy D. Whitten. 1993. “A cross-national analysis of economic voting: taking account of the political context.” *American Journal of Political Science* 37(2): 391-414.

Tavits, Margit. 2007. “Clarity of Responsibility and Corruption.” *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 218-229

Week 9 – October 24th – The Impact of Globalization on Accountability

This week we analyze the impact of globalization and economic constraints on the propensity of voters to hold incumbents accountable for economic outcomes.

Timothy Hellwig and David Samuels. 2007. “Voting in Open Economies. The Electoral Consequences of Globalization.” *Comparative Political Studies* 40(3): 283-306.

Jose Fernandez-Albertos, Alex Kuo, and Laia Balcells. “Economic Crisis, Globalization, and Partisan Bias: Evidence from Spain.” *International Studies Quarterly* 57(4): 804-816.

Week 10 – October 31st – Accountability in Times of Austerity and Welfare Reform

This week we examine to what extent voters have held incumbents accountable for austerity measures following the Great Recession.

Nathalie Giger and Moira Nelson. 2011. “The Electoral Consequences of Welfare State Retrenchment: Blame Avoidance or Credit Claiming in The Era of Permanent Austerity?.” *European Journal of Political Research* 50(1): 1-23.

Larry Bartels. 2014. “Ideology and Retrospection in Electoral Responses to the Great Recession.” In Nancy Bermeo and Larry M. Bartels, eds., *Mass Politics in Tough Times: Opinions, Votes and Protest in the Great Recession*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Week 11 – November 7th – Elections as Instruments to Discipline Governments for Corruption

Frederico Finan and Claudio Ferraz. 2008. Exposing corrupt politicians: the effect of Brazil’s publicly released audits on electoral outcomes. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 123(2): 703-745.

Alberto Chong, Ana de la O, Dean Karlan, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2014. Does corruption information inspire the fight or quash the hope? A field experiment in Mexico on voter turnout, choice, and party identification. *Journal of Politics* 77(1): 55-71.

Week 12 – November 14th – Horizontal Accountability

This week examines how institutional checks and balances can hold incumbents accountable.

Litschig, Stephan and Yves Zamboni. 2015. Judicial presence and rent extraction. Barcelona GSE Working Paper Series.

Bobonis, Gustavo J, Luis Camara R. Fuertes and Rainer Schwabe. 2016. Monitoring Corruptible Politicians. *The American Economic Review* 106(8):23712405.

November 21st – Thanksgiving recess

Week 13 – November 28th - In-class presentations of paper projects (first session) – Draft of the paper is due (before class)

Week 14 – December 5th – In-class presentations of paper projects (second session) – Written feedback is due.

Paper due December 12nd at noon.