This seminar provides a comparative introduction to electoral systems. After a brief introduction and discussion of some key indicators, we will examine the principal types of electoral systems worldwide. In the second half of the course, students will present reviews of country case studies of electoral systems and develop profiles of specific electoral systems based on their own research. We will also explore electoral engineering and the impact of electoral systems for the descriptive representation of women. Throughout the course there will be an interplay between general theories and specific cases.

Seminar Requirements and Policies


   Each week all seminar participants will complete a set of common readings. Most of the readings are listed in the course outline. Additional readings on electoral systems in specific countries will be assigned for the weeks of October 28 and November 4. All readings are in Farrell’s book, will be available on Blackboard, or will be passed out in class. I reserve the right to make reasonable adjustments to the syllabus.

2. **Focus Questions,** designed to help you get the most out of the readings and to stimulate discussion, will be posted on Blackboard by the preceding Saturday before each class (other than those led by students). I will assign primary responsibility for each question to a student, but all seminar participants should be prepared to answer as many questions as possible.

3. **Class Participation.** Although some material is most efficiently conveyed in short lecture segments, we will follow a seminar format as much as possible. Thus, seminar participants are expected to complete required readings and to be prepared to answer focus questions for each class. They should also be prepared to actively participate in discussions led by their peers.

   General class participation will count for 20 percent of the final grade. In assessing class participation, I will emphasize quality, rather than mere quantity. **You should attend every class.** Poor attendance or persistent tardiness will have a negative impact on your participation grade.

4. **Exam.** A take-home midterm will be posted by Saturday, October 3 and will be due by e-mail by 5 p.m. on Saturday, October 10. The exam will be accompanied by a statement certifying that the work is exclusively that of the student submitting it (please see point 8 below). Students may e-
mail me the exam any time before the deadline, but extensions will be given only in the case of a documented medical or personal emergency. In such an event, I must be notified before the deadline.

5. Country Case Review. During the latter half of the course, each student will write a short paper (maximum 5 pages) reviewing a case study of the electoral system in a specific country in light of the general issues treated in the course. The student also will lead the class discussion of the respective country.

Most of the case studies can be found in Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell, eds., *The Politics of Electoral Systems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), which includes chapters on Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, South Africa, and Spain. (I would rather that students not review Germany, Ireland, the United Kingdom, or the United States, as these countries will be covered extensively in class.) Additional case studies on Bolivia (ch. 19), Mexico (ch. 20) and Venezuela (ch. 18) are available in Matthew Soberg Shugart and Martin P. Wattenberg, eds. *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). I will make these readings accessible to students.

Countries will be assigned no later than September 30. Students will select cases in an order determined by random numbers. The completed papers must be e-mailed to the instructor and fellow students no later than Saturday, October 24. The reviews and corresponding readings will be discussed in class on October 28 and November 4. Grades will be based on the written work and performance during the class discussion. In making their oral presentations, reviewers may find it useful to present their key findings and arguments in a reader-friendly outline.

6. Electoral Profile. Each student also will complete an electoral profile of up to 10 pages on any country or political subdivision with competitive elections for which there is adequate data. (However, a student may not do the country case review and the electoral profile on the same country or part thereof.) The instructions for the electoral profile will be distributed by the time of the midterm. The profiles must be sent to the instructor and fellow students by e-mail no later than Saturday, November 14. They will be discussed in class on November 18 and December 2. Grades will be primarily based on the written work, though the oral presentation will also be taken into account.

7. Course Grade. The following weights will be used in computing final grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Case Review</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Profile</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In grading, I will use conventional cut-off points: 90% for a low A, 80% for a low B, 70% for a low C, and 60% for a low D. Although I must report whole letter grades, I will also compute plu-
es and minuses for my records. These distinctions can be useful in assessing a student’s relative achievements and in writing letters of recommendation.

8. Academic Integrity. Seminar participants are expected to comply with UTEP policies regarding academic integrity and plagiarism.

9. Adjustments in Course Schedule. I will do my best to follow the schedule outlined below, but I reserve the right to make reasonable adjustments with adequate warning if unforeseeable or uncontrollable circumstances (e.g. weather, illness, or travel) so warrant. It is not fair, however, to change the schedule simply to accommodate the preferences of some seminar participants because other students inevitably suffer.

10. Language. The readings and discussion will be in English. However, I do accept exam answers and papers in Spanish.

COURSE OUTLINE

AUGUST 26

Introduction to Course

SEPTEMBER 2

The Study of Electoral Systems


Some Key Indicators


SEPTEMBER 9

Plurality Systems


Shaun Bowler, Todd Donovan, and Jennifer van Heerde, “The United States of America: Perpetual Campaigning in the Absence of Competition,” in Michael Gallagher and Paul


SEPTEMBER 16

**Majoritarian Systems**


SEPTEMBER 23

**List Systems of Proportional Representation**


**The STV System of Proportional Representation**

SEPTEMBER 30

Mixed Electoral Systems


Assignment of Country Case Reviews

OCTOBER 3

Deadline for Posting of Midterm Exam Questions

OCTOBER 7

No Class

Take-Home Exam

OCTOBER 10

Deadline for Submitting Midterm Exam, 5 p.m. MDT

OCTOBER 14

Electoral Engineering and Democratization


**OCTOBER 21**

The Profession of Political Science and Electoral Systems


**OCTOBER 24**

Country Case Reviews due by e-mail (5 p.m. MDT)

**OCTOBER 28, NOVEMBER 4**

Country Case Reviews

Reading TBA; depends on students’ selection of cases (see point 5 above)

**NOVEMBER 11**

Electoral Systems and the Representation of Women

Farrell, *Electoral Systems*, pp. 163-165 (re-read)


NOVEMBER 14

Electoral Profiles due by e-mail (5 p.m.)

NOVEMBER 18, DECEMBER 2

Presentation of Electoral Profiles

Research on Electoral Systems: Achievements and Challenges