

POLS 5339: Comparative Political Institutions

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Class Hours: Wednesdays 6-8:50 pm
Class Location: Benedict Hall 205

Course Description

What are political institutions? How do democratic and authoritarian institutions come about, and what are their natures? What are different types of democratic and authoritarian institutions? What different outcomes do they produce? In this graduate seminar, you shall explore these questions through knowing the literature and conducting your own research.

Required Texts

- Arend Lijphart. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-six Countries*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 2012
- Milan W. Svobik. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012
- Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. Crown Books, New York, NY, 2012
- Rory Truex. *Making Autocracy Work: Representation and Responsiveness in Modern China*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2016

Other readings are available on Blackboard.

Course Objectives

Successful students will be able to:

1. understand different approaches to the study of political institutions.

2. identify the features of different political institutions and analyze their different consequences.
3. conduct independent empirical research on political institutions.

Course Requirements

1. Reading Assignments and Class Participation

Graduate seminars are different from undergraduate lectures. In a graduate seminar, you are expected to be more active both before and during class. This means that you should complete and digest the readings before class, and that during class, you should ask thoughtful questions, provide intelligent answers, and make informed comments. I will evaluate your participation by its quantity and quality. Because participation is impossible if you miss a class, you will lose 25 percent of the participation grade for each unexcused absence.

2. Reading Journal

You are required to keep a reading journal which includes at least 8 entries. There are 11 classes with readings, and you can choose which 8 to write about in the first class. Think of the entries as notes, only more organized and readable. They do not have to be essays but make sure we can understand what you talk about. The purposes of the reading journal are to share your thoughts with your classmates and help me evaluate the quality of your reading. **Each entry should be between 500 to 800 words and cover all the assigned readings for that class.**

I will create a collaborative Word document for each student, who writes all 8 entries there. An entry should: 1) very briefly summarize each reading; 2) point out the broad questions the readings address; and 3) critique the degree to which the readings answer these questions (or perhaps, what remaining or additional questions they leave unaddressed).

Besides writing 8 entries, you are required to review 8 entries posted by other classmates. Do this through adding marginal comments and suggesting changes on the collaborative document. To keep track, mark the spreadsheet after responding to each entry.

Journal entries are due Monday midnight and reviews are due Tuesday midnight.

3. Discussion Leader

Each student will be designated as the discussion leader of one class. You will choose when to be a discussion leader after the first class meeting. Your role as a discussion leader will be graded. **The discussion leader should email me his or her outline of discussion topics and questions on the Tuesday prior to class day.**

4. Research Paper

You shall write a research paper on political institutions. The paper should contain a research question, a literature review, a theory and hypothesis (or hypotheses), and hypothesis testing with empirical data. Mere descriptive studies or normative discussions do not meet this requirement. **Please talk to me about your research question before you decide on one.**

You must submit a research proposal first. The research proposal should include your research question, literature review, theory and hypothesis, and the methods and data you will use to test your hypothesis. See the course schedule for its due date.

You shall present your completed research during class. Each presentation should use slides and take about 10 minutes. Your research paper is due on Blackboard on the due date. Your research paper must be complete with analysis and conclusions and should be between 13 and 25 pages, including notes, tables, figures, and a bibliography.

Both your proposal and research paper should be typed using Times New Roman 12 pt. font size, double-spaced, paged with one inch margins in all four sides. And they should follow the APSA style or APA style. An APSA style manual is available on Blackboard.

Grading Policy

Your final grades will be determined as follows:

- 10%: Reading and participation
- 40%: Journal entries and reviews
- 10%: Discussion leader
- 10%: Research proposal
- 5%: Presentation
- 25%: Research paper

Your letter grade will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	
[90, 100]	A
[80, 90)	B
[70, 80)	C
[60, 70)	D
[0, 70)	F

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as one's own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Office of Student Life for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Refer to <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html> for further information.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Please discuss with me in person as soon as possible about any needs you might have. Or you may contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (phone: 5148, Email: cass@utep.edu) at 302 Union East within the first two weeks of classes.

Course Schedule

Week 1, 8/28: Course overview

Week 2, 9/4: Do institutions matter?

- Robert W. Jackman and Ross A. Miller. A renaissance of political culture? *American Journal of Political Science*, 40(3):632–659, 1996
- Jonathan Rodden. Back to the future: Endogenous institutions and comparative politics. In Mark Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman, editors, *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, pages 333–357. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2009
- Carmine Guerriero. Endogenous institutions and economic outcomes. *Economica*, 87(346):364–405, 2020
- Acemoglu and Robinson, Chs. 1 and 2

Week 3, 9/11: Democracy and autocracy I

- Svoboda, Chs. 1 and 2
- Michael J Abramowitz and Sarah Repucci. Democracy beleaguered. *Journal of Democracy*, 29(2):128–142, 2018
- Larry Diamond. Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of Democracy*, 13:21 – 35, 2002

Week 4, 9/18: Democracy and autocracy II

- Daron Acemoglu and James A Robinson. *The narrow corridor: States, societies, and the fate of liberty*. Penguin Press, New York, NY, 2019, Ch 2
- Yao Lin. *Value Pluralism and Liberal Democracy*. Phd thesis, Columbia University, New York, NY, 2016, Essay 1

Week 5, 9/25: Presidential v. parliamentary systems

- Lijphart, Chs. 1-3
- Scott Mainwaring and Matthew S Shugart. Juan linz, presidentialism, and democracy: a critical appraisal. *Comparative Politics*, pages 449–471, 1997
- Jose Antonio Cheibub. Minority governments, deadlock situations, and the survival of presidential democracies. *Comparative Political Studies*, 35(3):284–312, 2002

Week 6, 10/2: Centralization and decentralization

- Lijphart, Ch. 10
- Pradeep Chhibber and Ken Kollman. Party aggregation and the number of parties in India and the United States. *American Political Science Review*, 92(2):329–342, 1998
- Erik Wibbels. Madison in Baghdad?: Decentralization and federalism in comparative politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9:165–188, 2006
- Chen Cheng, Jiasheng Li, and Chuanchuan Zhang. Variations in governmental responses to and the diffusion of COVID-19: the role of political decentralization. *Working Paper*, 2020

Week 7, 10/9: Electoral systems

- Lijphart, Chs. 5 and 8
- Gary W Cox. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1997, pages 3-68
- Kathleen Bawn. Voter responses to electoral complexity: Ticket splitting, rational voters and representation in the federal republic of Germany. *British Journal of Political Science*, 29(3):487–505, 1999

Week 8, 10/16: Legislatures

- Lijphart, Chs. 6, 7 and 11
- Kaare Strom. Minority governments in parliamentary democracies: The rationality of non-winning cabinet solutions. *Comparative Political Studies*, 17(2):199–227, 1984

Week 9, 10/23: Policy and political consequences

- Lijphart, Chs. 13-17
- Detlef Jahn and Ferdinand Müller-Rommel. Political institutions and policy performance: A comparative analysis of central and Eastern Europe. *Journal of Public Policy*, 30(1):23–44, 2010

Week 10, 10/30: Theories of authoritarian politics I

- Svobik, Chs 3 and 4
- Acemoglu and Robinson, Ch. 11

Week 11, 11/6: Theories of authoritarian politics II

- Svobik, Chs 5-7
- Acemoglu and Robinson, Ch. 12

Week 12, 11/13: Submit proposal, no class

Week 13 11/20: Legislatures in authoritarian countries

- Truex, Chs 1-8

Week 14 11/27: No class

Week 15, 12/4: Student presentations

Research paper due at midnight, Monday 12/9