

PL SC 424.01: Topics in Comparative Government and Institutions
Executive-Legislative Politics

Professor Sona N. Golder

Time: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:25 - 2:15 p.m.

Place: 201 Donald H. Ford Building

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Office Hours: 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays (and by appointment)

Description

We live in a world where there is strong agreement concerning the importance and desirability of democracy. However, it is important to recognize that democracies exhibit considerable institutional variation; all democracies are not the same. One common way to distinguish between democracies is in terms of the form of government they have, that is, in terms of how the executive *comes* to power, and how the executive *remains* in power. This classification scheme includes three basic types of democracy: parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential. In this class, we examine how parliamentary, presidential, and semi-presidential democracies work.

Specifically, this course focuses on the life cycle of government cabinets and how the organization and role of the executive is affected by its relationship with the legislature in parliamentary, semi-presidential, and presidential democracies. We will look at how government cabinets form, survive, and terminate in these different types of democracies. This will involve looking closely at how the dynamics of executive-legislative relations differ across these regime types. Which actors have power to influence policy changes (or to enforce the status quo), and under what circumstances? In addition to considering government life cycles, we will examine the consequences of the different forms of democratic government for important political outcomes such as economic policy, political stability, and democratic survival.

Required Texts

There is one required book for the class, which is available in the university book store. Any other readings will be available on the course web site, where you can download and print them.

- Michael Laver & Norman Schofield. 1998 [1990]. *Multiparty Governments*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Course Goals

Our goal is to gain an understanding of the different types of institutional arrangements used by democracies around the world, and to explore the consequences of these institutional choices for

policy outcomes and political stability. In so doing, you will also gain a different perspective on politics in the United States.

Some of the concepts presented in the readings and in lecture will be straightforward, while others may take a reasonable amount of effort to understand. In some of the political science articles you will read, the methods used to test some of the observable implications of the theories will be entirely new to you. I do not expect you to familiarize yourself with all of the methodological tools used in the readings. Rather, through discussion and lecture, I hope to give you enough information so that you can evaluate the arguments we read. After you leave the class at the end of the semester, you should have a much deeper understanding of the dynamics of executive-legislative relations and their consequences for the quality of democracy.

Requirements

Attendance at class meetings is required. In my previous classes, attendance has been a good predictor of a student's performance on exams. If you do miss class, you are expected to get notes from a fellow student; I will not be conducting private 'make-up lectures' during office hours. You should come to class prepared to participate in discussions, and you should bring the relevant readings to class as well. You are encouraged to volunteer questions and observations; please note that I may call on students at random with questions. A tendency on your part to demonstrate a lack of knowledge of the readings or other material under discussion will have a negative effect on your participation grade.

There will be two midterm exams. You can expect regular 'homework' assignments. These homework assignments will consist of a mixture of in-class quiz-type assignments, multiple-choice assignments that will be submitted to the course website, and data-collection assignments. Finally, you have the choice between a 8-10 page research paper or a (cumulative) final exam.

If you choose the research paper option, you will have some flexibility in choosing the topic of this paper. I will provide some suggestions of appropriate questions early in the semester, though you may select any question you like (subject to instructor approval). Each paper must contain the following elements: 1) a research question, 2) a brief literature review, 3) a theory that answers your question derived from the literature, 3) an empirical test of your theory, 4) a conclusion. Writing is revision. Accordingly, you may turn this paper in to me up to three times (dates posted below). I will return your paper to you with comments. You may re-submit the paper to me twice (if you meet the first deadline, otherwise you may only re-submit once).

In the interests of fairness, homework assignments that are handed in late will not be graded and exam makeups will only be possible in extenuating circumstances (oversleeping, leaving early for a long weekend, etc., are not suitable excuses). If you are ill or have a university-accepted excuse for missing an exam, please notify me *prior* to the test date. If it is impossible to do so, given the nature of the emergency, you should notify me as quickly as possible after missing the exam. If you choose to write a research paper rather than take the final exam, please note that papers handed in late will automatically be given a lower score (and the extent of the grade reduction will be an increasing function of the number of days the paper is late).

Grades

Your final grade is a weighted average of the following components: Midterm 1 and Midterm 2 are *each* worth 20% and the final (cumulative) exam or research paper is worth 30%. Homework is worth 20%. The final 10% is based on your participation.

I will use the following scale to calculate your course grade:

A: 93.0+ — A-: 90.0 - 92.9 — B+: 87.0 - 89.9 — B: 83.0 - 86.9 — B-: 80.0 - 82.9 — C+: 77.0 - 79.9 — C: 73.0 - 76.9 — C-: 70.0 - 72.9 — D+: 67.0 - 69.9 — D: 63.0 - 66.9 — D-: 60.0 - 62.9 — F: Less than 60.0

Note: Your participation grade will be based on (i) attendance and (ii) participation. The percentage of classes that you attend will be the baseline for your participation grade. For example, if you attend 28 out of 35 classes, your baseline participation grade will be 80%. I will then add or subtract points based on your general level of preparation for class discussions. I do not add or subtract a particular set of points for every interaction that we have. Rather, the extent to which I add or subtract points from your baseline grade is based on an overall impression of your work over the course of the semester. Please remember that you are expected to do the reading for each day's class and come prepared to speak.

Exam Dates

Midterm 1: September 30, 2011.

Midterm 2: October 31, 2011.

Final Exam: Date and time to be announced - sometime the week of December 12.

News

I encourage you to read national and international newspapers online, paying particular attention to current government collapses and the formation of new governments. Going directly to international sources is recommended - I suggest you begin with the BBC online (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>) or the weekly magazine *The Economist*. If you search, you are likely to find English-language versions of other international newspapers as well. If you can read languages other than English, check media sources in the relevant countries as well. You are strongly encouraged to bring interesting articles to the attention of the class.

Schedule

This schedule should be treated as tentative and flexible. It may be the case that it takes us more or less time for a particular topic than I have allotted here. We will adapt accordingly. Note, however, that *I will not alter the exam dates*. A regularly-updated schedule that includes due dates for homework assignments will be available on the course website. You are expected to check this schedule regularly so that you are aware of all reading and other assignments.

Week 1: August 22 - 26 – Course introduction: approaches and topics.

REQUIRED:

Michael Laver & Norman Schofield. 1998 [1990]. *Multiparty Government: The Politics of Coalition in Europe*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. [required book] Chapter 1.

No Class on Wednesday or Friday, August 24 - 26 (Instructor at conference)

Week 2: August 29 - September 2 – Regime Types (Parliamentary, Presidential, Mixed).

REQUIRED:

Michael Laver & Norman Schofield. 1998 [1990]. *Multiparty Government: The Politics of Coalition in Europe*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. [required book] Chapter 2.

José Antonio Cheibub, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Raymond Vreeland. 2010. “Democracy and dictatorship revisited.” *Public Choice* 143: 67-101.

Clark et al. 2009. Excerpt from Chapter 11 (“Parliamentary, Presidential, and Mixed Democracies: Making and Breaking Governments”) in *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Pages TBA.

Week 3: September 5 - 9 – Regime Types II.

REQUIRED:

José Antonio Cheibub & Fernando Limongi. 2002. “Democratic Institutions and Regime Survival: Parliamentarism and Presidentialism Reconsidered.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 5: 151-179.

Laver & Schofield, Chapter 3.

No Class on Monday, September 5 (Labor Day)

Week 4: September 12 - 16 – Government Formation - Which Parties Get In?

REQUIRED:

Clark et al. 2009. Excerpt from Chapter 11 (“Parliamentary, Presidential, and Mixed Democracies: Making and Breaking Governments”) in *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Pages TBA.

Laver & Schofield, Chapters 4 and 5.

[Media accounts TBA]

Week 5: September 19 - 23 – Government Formation - How Are Portfolios Allocated? Basic OLS regression.

REQUIRED:

Laver & Schofield, Chapter 7.

Paul V. Warwick and James N. Druckman. 2006. “The portfolio allocation paradox: An investigation into the nature of a very strong but puzzling relationship.” *European Journal of Political Research* 45: 635-665.

Week 6: September 26 - 30 – Portfolio Allocation and Executive-Legislative Dynamics. Midterm review. Midterm 1.

Sona N. Golder and Jacqueline Thomas. 2011. “Portfolio Allocation and the Vote of No Confidence”. Manuscript.

1st Midterm Exam on Friday, September 30.

Week 7: October 3 - 7 – Delegation (Principal-Agent Relationships). Understanding spatial models.

REQUIRED READING:

Lupia, Arthur. 2003. “Delegation and its Perils”, in *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies* (eds. Kaare Strøm, Wolfgang C. Müller, and Torbjörn Bergman). New York: Oxford. pp. 33-54.

Week 8: October 10 - 14 – Government Formation and Portfolio Allocation in Presidential and Semi-Presidential Regimes.

REQUIRED READING:

Clark et al. 2009. Excerpt from Chapter 11 (“Parliamentary, Presidential, and Mixed Democracies: Making and Breaking Governments”) in *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Pages TBA.

Octavio Amorim Neto and Kaare Strøm. 2006. “Breaking the Parliamentary Chain of Delegation: Presidents and Non-partisan Cabinet Members in European Democracies”. *British Journal of Political Science* 36: 619-643.

Leonard R. Arriola. 2009. "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 42: 1339-1362.

Week 9: October 17 - 21 – Party Systems - What Determines the Number of Parties? More discussion of regression.

REQUIRED READING:

Clark et al. 2009. Chapter 13 ("Social Cleavages and Party Systems") in *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

OCTOBER 17: RESEARCH PAPER DRAFT MAY BE HANDED IN.

Week 10: October 24 - 28 – Government Formation - How Long Does it Take? Review for midterm.

REQUIRED READING:

Clark et al. 2009. Excerpt from Chapter 11 ("Parliamentary, Presidential, and Mixed Democracies: Making and Breaking Governments") in *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Pages TBA.

Sona N. Golder. 2010. "Bargaining Delays in the Government Formation Process". *Comparative Political Studies* 43: 3-32.

[Media accounts TBA]

Weeks 11 - 12: October 31 - November 11 – Government Stability and Termination. Midterm 2.

2nd Midterm Exam on Monday, October 31

REQUIRED READING:

Clark et al. 2009. Excerpt from Chapter 11 ("Parliamentary, Presidential, and Mixed Democracies: Making and Breaking Governments") in *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Pages TBA.

Laver & Schofield, Chapter 6.

Courtenay Ryals Conrad & Sona N. Golder. 2010. "Measuring Government Duration and Stability in Central Eastern European Democracies". *European Journal of Political Research* 49: 119-150.

Erik Damgaard. 2008. "Cabinet Termination in Western Europe", in Kaare Strøm, Wolfgang C. Müller and Torbjörn Bergman (Editors), *Cabinets and Coalition Bargaining: The Democratic Life*

Cycle in Western Europe. New York: Oxford University Press.

[Media accounts TBA]

Week 13: November 14 - 18 – Executive-Legislative Relations from a Legal Point of View. Financial and Economic Consequences of Government (In)Stability.

REQUIRED READING:

Jonathan Boston, Stephen Levine, Elizabeth McLeay, Nigel S Roberts and Hannah Schmidt. 1998. “Caretaker Government and the evolution of Caretaker Conventions in New Zealand” *Victoria University of Wellington Law Review* 30.

Glyn Davis, Alice Ling, Bill Scales and Roger Wilkins. 2001. “Rethinking Caretaker Conventions for Australian Governments”, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*: 60:11-26.

William Bernhard & David Leblang 2006. *Pricing Politics: Democratic Processes and Financial Markets*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 6.

James R. Martin. 2011. “Uncertain Rewards: The Impact of Political Uncertainty on Direct Investment Inflows”. Unpublished manuscript, Florida State University.

NOVEMBER 18: RESEARCH PAPER DRAFT MAY BE HANDED IN.

Thanksgiving Holiday (No Classes) on November 21 - 25

Week 14: November 28 - December 2 – Executives, veto-players, and economic policy changes.

REQUIRED READING:

Clark et al. 2009. Excerpt from Chapter 14 (“Institutional Veto Players”) in *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Pages 648-657.

George Tsebelis. 1995. “Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multipartyism.” *British Journal of Political Science* 25(3): 289-325.

James Raymond Vreeland. 2002. “Institutional Determinants of IMF Agreements.” Unpublished manuscript.

Week 15: December 5 - 9 – Parliamentarism and Presidentialism revisited.

REQUIRED READING:

Clark et al. 2009. Excerpt from Chapter 15 (“Consequences of Democratic Institutions”) in *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Pages 742-762.

Timothy Hellwig and David Samuels. 2008. “Electoral Accountability and the Variety of Democratic Regimes.” *British Journal of Political Science* 38: 65-90.

Final Exam (or due date of research paper) TBA

Additional Information

Academic Dishonesty

The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one’s work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor.

In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in class or take home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at: http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-Academic_Integrity/integrity.shtml.

Disabilities

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible. Reasonable accommodations will be made for all students with disabilities, but it is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor early in the term. Do not wait until just before an exam to decide you want to inform the instructor of a learning disability; any accommodations for disabilities must be arranged well in advance.