

Political Science 4331
The Two Dimensions of Electoral Politics

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

The electoral systems used to select legislative bodies around the world vary dramatically. We will begin this course by defining the individual electoral rules that go into creating every electoral system. We will then flesh out the conceptual dimensions along which the incentives created by combinations of electoral rules can vary. We will locate all of the most widely used (and even some pretty rare) electoral systems in a two-dimensional space based on the incentives they create for the behavior of voters, candidates, party leaders, and elected representatives. With this framework of expectations in place, we will then systematically study the impact of electoral incentives on many aspects of democratic politics that we care about --- including the choices voters are offered, the strategies that elected officials follow to seek reelection, and, ultimately, the kind and quality of representation voters receive. We will conclude the semester by considering the question of what reformers can hope to achieve when changing electoral rules.

Most fundamentally, you should think of electoral rules as formal institutions that incentivize certain behaviors. If voters, candidates, or members of parliament want to achieve certain outcomes, they must develop a strategy for making that outcome most likely. The strategy one chooses must take into account the rules about how the political game is played. For example, how a voter who wants policy to move in a different direction should cast her vote will be affected by the rules regarding district magnitude (the number of seats awarded in each district). An incumbent candidate who wants to win reelection may vote very differently on which proposed bills should become law depending on whether his re-nomination is controlled by a handful of party leaders or by voters in a primary. Whether the executive has to compromise on the ideological content of her preferred bills in order to get legislative support for them will be affected by whether legislators running for reelection are primarily concerned about their individual, personal reputations or the collective reputation they share with other members of their party.

Electoral systems are made up of rules that govern a host of issues related to how elections work, including rules about how candidates get access to the ballot; the extent to which voters can *disturb* the ballot presented to them; to what level voters votes will be pooled before seats are awarded; how many votes each voter gets to cast and whether they can select individual candidates or just party banners; how seats are allocated within a district or tier once all the votes are counted; and whether certain thresholds must be met before a seat can be won. As we will discuss in great deal over the course of the semester, these rules have effects on *interparty* politics and *intraparty* politics. Aspects of intraparty politics we will explore include the relationship between supporters and a party and the relationship between party leaders and rank-and-file politicians. Aspects of interparty politics we will explore include the number of political parties that exist, their relative size, and their position in a policy space.

Team

This course will co-taught with Mr. Patrick Cunha. He can be reached at pcunhasilva@wustl.edu.

Course Readings

Reynolds, Andrew, Ben Reilly, and Andrew Ellis. 2005. *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Available for download at <https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/electoral-system-design-new-international-idea-handbook>

Herron, Erik, Pekkanen, Robert J., and Matthew S. Shugart, eds. 2018. *The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems*. New York: Oxford University Press. Available digitally through the library's website.

Additional readings, denoted with an *, will be made available via Canvas.

Course Requirements

Participation

Please plan to attend all class periods and to have completed the readings so that you can participate in a discussion. Every Friday you should send me a brief e-mail assessing your participation during the week. I will respond to your e-mail with my own assessment. Attendance and participation will account for 25% of your total grade.

If you have trouble knowing what you are supposed to "get from" the readings or trouble seeing a connection between the readings and what we are doing in class, please raise the issue immediately. The course is organized around important outcomes of electoral systems. So, to the extent we deal with individual national cases, I want you to focus on how to put each case into a larger, comparative context. Each country's electoral system is part of a larger family and each family has attributes that lead to generalizations regarding interparty and intraparty politics. It is these cause-and-effect relationships upon which I want you to focus. Remember, electoral systems are incentive structures for voters, candidates, sitting legislators, etc. We will be deducing hypotheses about how we expect these systems to influence behavior, and we will be looking at the empirical record to determine the extent to which our expectations hold.

Some days I will spend a great deal of time summarizing the readings, but most days I will assume that you have done them and that we can use them as a common base of knowledge. Again, if it appears to you that there is a fundamental gap between your readings and our discussions, let's talk about it sooner rather than later. Otherwise, I will expect your regular participation.

Class Presentation

Each of you will make a class presentation of approximately 45 minutes. The presentation will cover the electoral system of a particular national case including an overview of its electoral system; the political consequences of the electoral system for the party system, parties themselves, parliament, and the government; and any possibilities of electoral reform. Your oral presentation should be accompanied by slides outlining your topic, hard copies of which you distribute to your peers.

I expect you to introduce new material as well. That new material should focus on the consequences of the electoral system for relationships among members of the same party, relationships between parties, and/or relationships between the legislature and the executive. You should make use of *original empirical data* and draw on *previous scholarly work* on a relevant topic. Please feel free to consult with one of us regarding your original subject matter and relevant extra readings. Your presentations will account for 25% of your total grade.

Quizzes

On a very regular basis we will have very brief quizzes regarding the day's readings and/or previous discussion. Questions formats include multiple choice; true/false; fill-in-the-blank; matching; short answer; etc. You are welcome to submit possible quiz questions. At the end of the semester, I will drop the scores of your worst quizzes (25% of them) and use your best quizzes (75% of them). The quizzes will be worth 25% of your total grade.

Memos to Reformers

Early in the semester, we will randomly split you into small groups. Your group will take on the role of consultants from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Each group will have to identify two cases of electoral reform. For each case, you will need to find information for the motivation behind the reform (for instance, did reform aim to increase a minority group's representation? Or, did the reform aim to decrease the number of parties?). After finding the motivation, you will need to search for relevant data on the outcome of interest before and after the change. You will use this data to evaluate if the reform had the desired effect. Consult the scholarly literature on the electoral systems used before and after the change --- in your countries or elsewhere. You will present your results in the form of two memos (4 to 5 pages each). The memos will assess whether the reforms were properly designed (given the motivation) and whether they have had the intended consequences. The first memo will be due October 17, and the second memo will be due December 13th at 6:00 pm. The memos will be worth 25% of your total grade (12.5% per memo).

Course Policies

One-on-One Consultation. I strongly encourage you to stop by frequently to see me about the course. Just send me an e-mail, and we will find a mutually convenient time to get together. Staying engaged with the course materials and getting informal feedback at regular intervals will have a big impact on your performance on the required assignments.

Due Dates. Due dates are detailed in the syllabus. If you foresee a conflict with some due date, see me immediately to talk about options, if I can offer any. I do not grant last-minute exceptions, and I will penalize any late work severely.

Attendance. I highly recommend it! It can directly and indirectly impact your grade. See the participation description above.

Technology. Do not use your phone at any time during class. Turn it off and put it out of your sight. There will be times during the semester when I will encourage you to make use of laptops. Other than those exact times, please abstain entirely from texting, surfing the web, etc. An suspected offense will result in receiving no credit on the next four quizzes given. Students who are repeatedly disruptive to my train of thought or the focus of their fellow students will be administratively dropped from the course without credit.

Special Accommodations. If you require any, set up a time to meet with me early in the semester so that I can make sure your needs are met.

Academic Integrity. Plagiarism, misrepresenting one's identity, cheating, etc. will not be tolerated. Please review the university's policies in this regard at:

<http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html>

Course Schedule

August 29
Course Overview
No Readings

The Rules of the Game

September 5
The Component Rules that Make Up all Electoral Systems &
The Two Dimensions along which Systems Vary
*Carey and Shugart 1995
*Shugart 2001

September 12 & September 19
Families of Electoral Systems and Their Locations in the I-I Space
IDEA Handbook pp. 35-120, 174-183

Interparty Politics

September 26
The Effective Number of Parties
Cox, Gary. Making votes count: strategic coordination in the world's electoral systems.
Cambridge University Press, 1997, Introduction. [Ebook available on the library website.](#)
*Crisp and Demirkaya 2018
*Crisp, Potter, and Lee 2012

October 3
Party Locations
* Dow 2001
* Dow 2011
* Ezrow 2008
* Wagner 2012

October 10
Congruence
* Huber and Powell 1994
* Golder and Stramski 2010
* Blais and Bodet 2006
* Spoon and Kluver 2015

Intraparty Politics

October 17
Campaign Content
* Cox and Thies 1998
* Crisp et al. 2013
* Bowler, Farrell, and McAllister 1996
* De Winter and Baudewyns 2015

October 24
Constituency Service

- * Shugart, Valdini, and Suominen 2005
- * Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1984
- * Weitz-Shapiro 2012
- * Andre, Depauw, and Martin

October 31

1st IDEA Memo Due on Canvas at 6:00 pm
No class

November 7

Cameral Rules and Party Discipline

- * Carey 2007
- * Haspel, Remington, and Smith 1998
- * Martin 2011
- * Jones et al. 2002

November 14

Policy or Pork

- * Stratmann and Baur 2002
- * Crisp et al. 2004
- * Hicken and Simmons 2008
- * Kerevel 2015

November 21

Thanksgiving Break

No Readings

Electoral Reform

November 28

Reform on the Interparty Dimension
TBA

December 5

Reform on the Intraparty Dimension
TBA

December 13

2nd IDEA Memo Due