

Department of Political Science
Washington University
Fall Semester 2013.

Course No. L32 4331 Pol Sci

Seigle Hall 306 M-W---- 10:00AM 11:30AM.

Topics in Comparative Politics: Comparative Voting

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Office Hours Siegle Hall # 236: Tuesdays: 10:30 A.M. to Noon
Other times welcome by appointment.

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Voting is probably the most basic act of democratic participation. And yet it is greatly misunderstood. Most of us understand at, some basic level, that ‘we don’t always get what we vote for,’ but most of us don’t know a whole lot more than that. It turns out, that the science of politics has actually figured it out. Most of what there is to know about the process of voting is relatively clearly known. In this course we will survey the rich knowledge accumulated over the last five or six decades about the act of voting and, probably more importantly, its consequences. We will place all of these issues within the context of existing political theories. In the course we will discuss the politics and manipulation of votes within different political institutions, electoral competition, and government and legislative coalitions.

The main emphases of the course are: (1) Voting, like any political phenomenon, must be understood in light of culture and history of the environment in which it takes place. (2) Politics must be taught and understood from a theoretical perspective. It is not enough to count events. We must provide a theoretical account of the logic behind them.

The Course is divided into 5 chapters: *Introduction, Strategic Voting and Entry, Electoral Coordination and its Effects, A General Equilibrium Electoral Competition Model and Multi-Member District: as a Preferred Method of Voting.*

The midterm will count for 40% of the final grade. Class participation will count for 20% of the grade. The remainder 40% of the final grade will be determined by five short memos due at the end of every chapter of the class. We will discuss this requirement during our second meeting on September 4th.

Required Books: Gary Cox: *Making Votes Count*
Schofield and Sened: *Multiparty Democracy*

Enjoy !!!

Course Work: Students are expected to read carefully the required reading before every class. In light of the relatively small size of the class we will try to have considerable time for class discussion of the reading materials and students will be expected to show proficiency during class discussion. The midterm will consist of a list of concepts from the reading and class discussions and one essay question. You will get 50% of your grade for that exam for the concepts and 50% for the essay question. Both the list of concepts and the essay questions will be given to you prior to the review sessions before the midterm. The exam will be conducted from the comfort of wherever you want to be while taking it. Class participation will be evaluated by your actual participation in class. The five memos that you will submit during the semester that apply concept learned in class to current events of your choice will be graded based on your proficiency with the concepts learned in class as illustrated in those memos and your ability to apply them to useful cases.

Grading

Grading follows the logic I articulate here to help you form the appropriate expectations regarding your grades for the assignments in class.

- A: Outstanding understanding, ability to explain, creatively integrate, and critique the material, coupled with a demonstrated ability to structure thought and present it in a logical and lucid flow.
- A-: Same as above sort of 'outstanding' and 'perfectly lucid.'
- B+: Very good understanding of the material and a demonstrated ability to explain, integrate, and critique the material, coupled an ability to structure the paper in a logical flow.
- B: A good understanding of the material with some ability to explain, integrate, and critique the material coupled with an ability to structure the paper properly.
- B-: An understanding of the material and an ability to explain and integrate it into a coherent paper.
- C+: An understanding of the material with an ability to explain and integrate it.
- C: Demonstrate knowledge of the material covered in the reading and in class.
- D: Partial even if somewhat inadequate knowledge of the material.
- F: No demonstration of knowledge of material.

Challenging a Grade

Grading takes time and reflection. If you feel that you got a lower grade than you deserve, write an account, explaining why you think that is the case and put it in my mailbox in the Department. I will reply with a detailed explanation of the reasons for the grade. If you are still unsatisfied, you can resubmit the challenge, further articulating the essence of your dissatisfaction. I will consider your notes and regrade your work. The grade you receive on the second grading is your final grade and it may be lower than your initial grade.

Course Requirements and Policies:

Preparation and participation – students are expected to have carefully read the readings prior to class meetings in which they are discussed, and to participate in class discussions. An essential part of this course is critical thought and discussion of political issues, not just reading about them. Note that a crucial part of participation involves respect for other students in the class and for their views.

Students with disabilities -- If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class, please see me within the first two weeks of the course. Students who believe they have a disability and may require special accommodations, but who have not yet had that disability documented, are encouraged to contact the Cornerstone – Center for Advanced Learning at (314) 935-4153 or 4062.

Note on academic honesty -- Cheating, plagiarism, or any form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action as recommended by the Dean of Students.

Course Schedule and Readings

1. Introduction

1st Meeting (August 28th) Organizational Meeting

Syllabus will be handed out, rules of the game explained.

2nd Meeting (September 4st) Discussion

No reading requirements

3rd Meeting (September 9th) Introduction to Social Choice and Voting Theory

Doron, G. and I. Sened. 2001. *Political Bargaining: Theory, Practice and Process*
London: Sage Publications. 2.1-2.3.

2. Strategic Voting and Entry

4th Meeting (September 11th) Duverger's Propositions

Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2.

5th Meeting (September 16th) Introduction to Electoral Systems

Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3.

First Memo is due

6th Meeting (September 21st) Single-member Single-ballot Systems

Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 4.

7th Meeting (September 23rd) Multimember Electoral Systems

Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 5.

8th Meeting (September 28th) Single-member Dual-ballot Systems

Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6, 7.

9th Meeting (September 30th) Party Labels and Strategic Entry

Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 8.

10th Meeting (October 2nd) The Japanese Case

Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 9.

3. Electoral Coordination and Its Effects

11th Meeting (October 7th) **From Local to National Level**

Second Memo is Due

Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 10.

12th Meeting (October 9th) **The Number of Parties**

Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 11.

13th Meeting (October 14th) Q&A sessions to prepare for the **Midterm Exam**

14th Meeting (October 16th) **Midterm Exam**

15th Meeting (October 21st) **Representation**

Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 12.

16th Meeting (October 23rd) **Dominant Parties**

Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 13.

17th Meeting (October 28th) **Realignment**

Cox, G. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 14, 15.

Third Memo is Due

4. A General Equilibrium Model of Electoral Competition

18th Meeting (October 30th) **Convergence Policy Choice**

Schofield and Sened. 2006. *Multiparty Democracy*. NY: Cambridge University Press. 2.1-2.5.

19th Meeting (November 4th) **Non-convergence Policy Choice**

Schofield and Sened. 2006. *Multiparty Democracy*. NY: Cambridge University Press. 2.6-2.10.

20th Meeting (November 6th) **The Case of Israel**

Schofield and Sened. 2006. *Multiparty Democracy*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Chap. 3.

21st Meeting (November 11th) **The Uncovered Set**

W.T. Bianco and I. Sened. 2005. "Uncovering Conditional Party Government: Re-assessing the Evidence for Party Influence in Congress and State Legislatures"
American Political Science Review, Vol 99: 361-372

22nd Meeting (November 13th): Negotiating the Deal: Legislative Politics in the U.S. Congress

Gyung-Ho Jeong, Gary J. Miller and Itai Sened. 2009. "Closing the Deal: Negotiating Civil Rights Legislation". *American Political Science Review*, 103 (4): 588-606

23rd Meeting (November 18th): 'Structure Induced Equilibria' in the U.S. House of Representatives'

Kenneth A. Shepsle. 1979. "Institutional Arrangements and Equilibrium in Multidimensional Voting Models," *American Journal of Political Science* 23: 23-57.

5. Multi-Member District: a Preferred Method of Voting?

24th Meeting (November 20th): Attractive Features of the Multi-Member District Method

John M. Carey and Simon Hix. 2011. "The electoral sweet spot: Low-magnitude proportional electoral systems." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 383-397

25th Meeting (November 25th): Corruption Under Multi Member District Methods

Chang, Eric C.C. and Miriam Golden. 2007. "Electoral systems, district magnitude and corruption." *British Journal of Political Science*, 37:115-137

Fourth Memo is Due

November 26th – 30th: Thanksgiving Break:

Enjoy Every Minute of it but don't Drink and Drive!!!

26th Meeting (November 27th): Manipulating Vote Counts in Multi Member district Systems

Carlos Costa and Itai Sened. 2011. "A Marginal Return Theory of Politics with an application to Multi-Member District Electoral Systems," Unpublished Manuscript. Washington University in St. Louis.

27th Meeting (December 2nd): Political Polarization in the U.S. Why and How?

Dan Alexander and Itai Sened. 2013. "Political Polarization in the U.S. Why and How?" Unpublished Manuscript. Washington University in St. Louis.

28th Meeting (December 4th): Concluding Remarks

Fifth and Final Memo is due