

Department of Political Science
Washington University
Fall Semester 2011.

Course No. L32 4331 Pol Sci
Seigle # 103 TT 11:30 A.M.-1:00 P.M.

Topics in Comparative Politics: Comparative Voting

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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.*

There will be a midterm and a final in this class. 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 the final exam.

Required Books: Robin Farquharson: *Theory of Voting*
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 and the final will consist of a list of concepts from the reading and class discussions and one essay question. For each exam 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 question will be given to you prior to the review sessions before the midterm and the final. But the exams themselves will be conducted with closed books and notebooks. Class participation will be evaluated by your actual participation in class and five memos that you will submit during the semester that apply concept learned in class to current events of your choice.

Grading

In this class like any other class, grading follows the following logic. I articulate it here to help you form the appropriate expectations regarding your grades for the assignments in class.

A: Outstanding understanding of the material, ability to explain, creatively integrate, and critique the material, coupled with a demonstrated ability to structure thought and present it in a logical and perfectly 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 30th) **Organizational Meeting**

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

2nd Meeting (September 1st) **Discussion**

No reading requirements

3rd Meeting (September 6th) **Introduction to Voting Theory**

Farquharson, R. 1969. *Theory of Voting*

4th Meeting (September 8th) **Introduction to Social Choice 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

5th Meeting (September 13th) **Duverger's Propositions**

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

6th Meeting (September 15th) **Introduction to Electoral Systems**

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

First Memo is due

7th Meeting (September 20th) **Single-member Single-ballot Systems**

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

8th Meeting (September 22nd) **Multimember Electoral Systems**

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

9th Meeting (September 27th) **Single-member Dual-ballot Systems**

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

10th Meeting (September 29th) **Party Labels and Strategic Entry**

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

11th Meeting (October 4th) **The Japanese Case**

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

12th Meeting (October 6th) Q&A sessions to prepare for the **Midterm Exam**

Second Memo is Due

13th Meeting (October 11th) **Midterm Exam**

3. Electoral Coordination and Its Effects

14th Meeting (October 13th) **From Local to National Level**

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

15th Meeting (October 18th) **The Number of Parties**

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

16th Meeting (October 20th) **Representation**

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

17th Meeting (October 25th) **Dominant Parties**

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

18th Meeting (October 27th) **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

19th Meeting (November 1st) **Convergence Policy Choice**

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

20th Meeting (November 3rd) **Non-convergence Policy Choice**

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

21st Meeting (November 8th) **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 10th) **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 15th): **'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 17th): **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 22nd): **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.

Forth Memo is Due

November 23rd-27th: **Thanksgiving Break:**

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

26th Meeting (November 29th): **Class Discussion: The Kick off of the Primaries**

27th Meeting (December 1st): **Class Discussion: is going to win the Presidential and congressional elections this time around?**

28th Meeting (December 6th): **Concluding Remarks**

29th Meeting (December 8th) Review Session Q & A towards **final exam**

Fifth and Final Memo is due