

Comparative Institutions

PLCP 8200
M 3:30-6 pm
Fall 2017

Prof. Carol Mershon
Office hours: Fri 3:30-5 pm; by appt
email mershon@virginia.edu

COURSE OVERVIEW. The study of political institutions is quite broad and diverse, so that one course cannot provide an exhaustive survey of the field. To illustrate the area of study, we focus on select prominent research questions, both classic and cutting-edge. We look at institutions through the lenses of different research traditions. The questions examined allow us to investigate institutions as constraints and as subject to change, in established democracies and in new democracies and authoritarian systems, and in multiple regions of the world. Our readings and discussions also at times bridge comparative politics, international relations, US politics, and political theory.

*****Amendment to syllabus, 08/14/2017, in view of 08/11 and 08/12 events:

All members of this course will work together to define new readings of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the same time that we maintain the course focus on institutions. On our first day of class, 08/28, we will begin to discuss such additions of readings—and subtractions or reclassifications (as recommended, no longer required) of readings now listed on the syllabus.

COURSE AIMS. The course pursues four chief goals, three of which regard political institutions. The course is designed to help you evaluate:

- reasons why the study of institutions is central to political science
- different approaches to the study of institutions, and
- efforts to integrate theoretical and empirical analysis in the study of institutions.

Beyond institutional analysis and comparative politics, the course will help you:

- craft a research proposal for your M.A. thesis and/or dissertation and/or grant application. Your proposal will equip you to write:
 - your thesis, dissertation prospectus, and/or grant proposal to support dissertation research
 - drafts of a conference paper and/or an article manuscript.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Class participation:** As this is a graduate seminar, all students are expected to complete the required reading before each week's class meeting and to contribute to class discussion. **(20%)**

2. **Class discussant:** One or two people each week will be in charge of leading our discussion in coordination with me, and every seminar participant will have to perform as discussant three times in the semester. In addition to leading the discussion on the required readings, the discussants should briefly report on the recommended readings. As discussant, then, you help all students place required readings in a broader context; you can also gain deeper knowledge of a given area in preparation for your research proposal. The discussants should write a brief list of discussion questions, at least one of which explicitly invites input from me. Discussants are encouraged to email me for guidance on preparing questions, especially early in the semester. In specifying a "brief" list of questions, I emphasize that we aim for deep discussion of select questions: the list should thus include no more than seven questions and, if it includes more than

five, should designate the high-priority questions (e.g., with rank-ordering or with asterisks). The discussants should post the question list on our Collab Resources page (folder: Discussion questions) no later than **Sunday 3 pm before class. (10% each, total of 3 times=30%)**

3. *Research proposal/project*: A research proposal in some ways resembles a journal article, whether empirical or theoretical, although it lacks an article's full complement of analysis. The key elements of the proposal point to its similarities with a journal article. In the proposal, you:

- clearly state your research question or puzzle,
- take stock of extant scholarship relevant to your question,
- make an argument that answers your question,
- if at all possible, engage in a preliminary, partial analysis answering your question, which shows the intellectual promise and the practical feasibility of your approach, and
- articulate the contributions and broader implications of your project.

If you propose to conduct empirical research, you also need to:

- develop testable hypotheses consistent with your proposed research and identify alternative rival hypotheses as drawn from extant work
- specify and justify a research design for testing hypotheses, identifying, e.g., measures, types of data needed, criteria for case selection

The preliminary, partial analyses in empirical projects will serve as pilot studies. Note that two folders in Collab Resources, "Data repositories" and "Datasets," will help you assess extant data sources that might be relevant to an empirical project.

In designated weeks, you submit written work on your project and you prepare comments on another student's project. Students present the near-final project to the entire class and serve as discussant on another's project in the penultimate and last class meetings of the semester. Each investment in the project leads to the next, and all culminate in the completed project.¹

Altogether, the work on the research proposal counts for half of the course grade. **(50%)**

Guidelines and due dates on research projects. Be sure to consult the Collab folder, "Resources for research proposals and presentations," for guidance on multiple aspects of your work on the research proposal in this class, including, e.g., tips for peer review.

October 2: Identifying options for research questions

Identify and describe three research ideas about political institutions. Prepare a brief summary of your three ideas (1-2 single-spaced pages) and submit to Collab Assignments by **Monday, October 2, 11:55 pm**. Your succinct summary of each idea should answer four questions:

1. How would you state your research interest in the form of a question?
2. What are you seeking to explain?
3. Why is the question important?
4. What preliminary explanation(s) do you have?

Your summary and my feedback will enable you to make an informed decision about which of your three good ideas is the best question to choose as you pursue for your research proposal.

¹ Thanks to Anne Meng and Margit Tavits for sharing graduate syllabi. Thanks to Anne Meng, Sonal Pandya, Margit Tavits, and students in prior iterations of PLCP 8200 for discussing ideas on research proposal assignments.

October 16: Choosing your research question

Submit to Collab Assignments by **Monday, October 16, 11:55 pm** a two-page single-spaced statement of your choice of research question. Address the same four items that you did on 10/02, now focusing on the one question chosen and incorporating revisions in view of feedback.

November 6: Early draft, with at minimum: motivation (as part of introduction), extant work, argument, and outline for assessing argument

Submit an early draft of your paper at Collab Assignments by **Monday, November 6, 11:55 pm**. If your draft proposal can go beyond the minimum contents, even in outline form, you will benefit: you will receive feedback on your larger plans for the proposal.

November 13: Peer review of your partner's draft, due Monday, November 13, 11:55 pm.

Submit two copies via email, one to your assigned partner and the other to me. Prepare at least two pages (single-spaced) of feedback. As you prepare your peer review, see the Collab folder entitled, "Resources for research proposals and presentations."

November 27 and December 4: Presentations of full drafts of proposals

On our last two class days of the semester, we will have conference-style presentations of research proposals (15 minutes each), along with commentary offered by discussants and time reserved for full-class discussion of that day's "panel." Email the full draft to your discussant and me by **Sunday, 12 noon**, before the day you present (**either November 26 or December 3**). Each draft should address, if only in preliminary fashion, the bulleted elements listed at top p. 2.

December 15 (last day of exams): **Submission of final research proposal by 5 pm**, via Collab Assignments. The final version of the research proposal should be roughly 10,000 words.

READINGS. Article-length readings are available on Collab Resources. Three books are available for purchase at Amazon, both new and used.

- Boix, Carles. 2015. *Political Order and Inequality*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mares, Isabela. 2015. *From Open Secrets to Secret Voting: Democratic Electoral Reforms and Voter Autonomy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Min, Brian. 2015. *Power and the Vote: Elections and Electricity in the Developing World*. Cambridge University Press.

Read the weekly assignments in the order they appear on the syllabus. Required and recommended readings do not exhaust the available literature in a given area, of course. Yet they combine to illustrate the evolution of scholarship addressing related questions. Again, when you serve as discussant, you have the responsibility of using your understanding of the recommended readings to help anchor discussion of required readings in a broader context. For everyone, all modules of recommended readings offer resources that might be useful as you prepare research proposals or study for comprehensive exams.

I view it as an essential responsibility to include on this syllabus the Statement on Sexual Violence distributed by the UVa Office of the Dean of Students. You will find that statement, quoted in its entirety, as an Appendix to the syllabus.

SCHEDULE

08/28 *Introduction*

Choose two journal article abstracts on Collab (your choice of Required readings before 10/30, thus excluding book chapters) and be prepared to discuss: What is (are) the central research question(s)? Other questions will emerge as our collective discussion unfolds. Please bring a **printout** of the two abstracts with you.

As you review the syllabus to choose the two article abstracts: Choose at least one week before 10/30 in which you wish to serve as discussant. By the end of class 08/28, we will settle consensually on two discussants for 09/04. By 09/05 at the latest, I will send everyone a Doodle scheduler to settle on discussants throughout the semester.

*****To reiterate: All members of this course will work together to define new readings of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the same time that we maintain the course focus on institutions. On 08/28, we will begin to discuss such additions of readings—and subtractions or reclassifications (as recommended, no longer required) of readings now listed on the syllabus.

09/04 *Approaches to studying political institutions*

Required

- From Rhodes, R. A. W., Sarah A. Binder, and Burt A. Rockman, eds. 2006. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. Oxford University Press:
 - Preface (xii-xvii).
 - Shepsle, Kenneth A. "Rational Choice Institutionalism," 23-38.
 - Sanders, Elizabeth. "Historical Institutionalism," 39-55.
 - Hay, Colin. "Constructivism," 56-74.
 - Rhodes, R. A. W., "Old Institutionalisms," 90-108.
- Blyth, Mark. 2007. "Powering, Puzzling, or Persuading? The Mechanisms of Building Institutional Orders." *International Studies Quarterly* 51 (4): 761-777.
- Tsai, Kellee S. 2006. "Adaptive Informal Institutions and Endogenous Institutional Change in China." *World Politics* 59 (1): 116-141.

Note: If you took Prof. Meng's Institutions seminar, be prepared to offer a few remarks on how the assignments on "Approaches" in the two courses speak to each other.

Recommended

Rational Choice:

- Aldrich, John H. 1993. "Rational Choice and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* (hereafter *AJPS*) 37 (1): 246-278.

Historical Institutionalism:

- Mahoney, James. 2001. "Path-Dependent Explanations of Regime Change: Central America in Comparative Perspective." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36 (1): 111-141.

Constructivism:

- Bleich, Erik. 2002. "Integrating Ideas into Policy-Making Analysis: Frames and Race Policies in Britain and France." *Comparative Political Studies* (hereafter *CPS*) 35 (9): 1054-1076.

PART ONE: THE WORKINGS OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

09/11 *Parties and party systems*

Required

- Chhibber, Pradeep, and Mariano Torcal. 1997. "Elite Strategy, Social Cleavages, and Party Systems in a New Democracy: Spain." *CPS* 30(1): 27-54.
- Mair, Peter. 1997. "Party Systems and Structures of Competition." Ch. 9 in *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations*, Peter Mair. Oxford UP, 199-223.
- Boix, Carles. 2007. "The Emergence of Parties and Party Systems." In *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, eds. Carles Boix and Susan Stokes. Oxford UP, 499-521.
- Aldrich, John H. 2011. *Why Parties? A Second Look*. University of Chicago Press. Skim Ch. 1, 3-26. Read Ch. 2, 27-64. You may wish to consult CM's notes on Aldrich, available as a separate, non-required document.
- Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2013. "Why There is (Almost) No Christian Democracy in Post-Communist Europe." *Party Politics* 19 (2): 319-342.

Recommended

Classics:

- Sartori, Giovanni. 1976. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge UP. Ch. 1, 3-38 (speaks esp. to those in political theory), Chs. 5-6, 119-216, and Ch. 9, 273-323 (locus of typology discussed in Mair 1997).
- Stokes, Susan C. 1999. "Political Parties and Democracy," *Annual Review of Political Science* (hereafter *ARPS*) 2: 243-267.

Recent:

- Mershon, Carol, and Olga Shvetsova. 2013. "The Microfoundations of Party System Stability in Legislatures." *Journal of Politics* (hereafter *JOP*) 75 (4): 865-878. You may wish to consult CM's document on the basics of the M-S formal model.

09/18 *Electoral institutions*

Required

- Amorim Neto, Octavio and Gary W. Cox. 1997. "Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures, and the Number of Parties." *AJPS* 41 (1): 149-174.
- Moser, Robert G. 1999. "Electoral Systems and the Number of Parties in Postcommunist States." *World Politics* 51 (3): 359-384.
- Stoll, Heather. 2007. "Social Cleavages and the Number of Parties: How the Measures You Choose Affect the Answers You Get." *CPS* 41 (11): 184-211.
- John M. Carey and Simon Hix. 2011. "The Electoral Sweet Spot: Low-Magnitude Proportional Electoral Systems." *AJPS* 55 (2): 383-397.
- Marschall, Melissa J., and Amanda Rutherford. 2016. "Voting Rights for Whom? Examining the Effects of the Voting Rights Act on Latino Political Incorporation." *AJPS* 60 (3): 590-606.

Recommended

Classics:

- Riker, William H. 1982. "The Two-Party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science." *American Political Science Review* (hereafter *APSR*) 76 (4): 753-766.
- Ordeshook, Peter C. and Olga V. Shvetsova. 1994. "Ethnic Heterogeneity, District Magnitude, and the Number of Parties." *AJPS* 38 (1): 100-123.
- Carey, John M., and Matthew Soberg Shugart. 1995. "Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas." *Electoral Studies* 14 (4): 417-439.

Recent:

- Huber, John D. 2012. "Measuring Ethnic Voting: Do Proportional Electoral Laws Politicize Ethnicity?" *AJPS* 56 (4): 986-1001.

09/25 *Democratic electoral reforms*

Required

- Mares. 2015. *From Open Secrets to Secret Voting*. Read all (268 pp. without References).

Note: At a time TBA during the week of 09/25: I will hold extra office hours, just for members of this class, so as to facilitate discussion of ideas for research proposals.

10/02 No class: *Reading Day!*

This very short set of readings (< 25 pp total) guides your **statement (1-2 pages) on three potential research questions**, due at the latest at Collab **11:55 pm, Mon, 10/02**. Earlier submissions are welcome but not required.

Required

- Weingast, Barry R. 2010 (revised from 1995). "Structuring Your Papers (CalTech Rules)." Manuscript, Stanford University (4 pp.)
- Przeworski, Adam and Frank Salamon. 2001. (Revised 1988, 1995). "The Art of Writing Proposals." Social Science Research Council (5 pp.)
- King, Gary. 2006. "Publication, Publication." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39 (1): 119-125.
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1995. "The Importance of Research Design in Political Science." *APSR* 89 (2): 475-481. KKV 1995 forms part of a symposium on KKV 1994.

Note: At a time TBA during the week that I return feedback on your ideas for research questions: I will hold extra office hours, just for members of this class, so as to facilitate discussion of ideas for research proposals. I urge you to make an appointment with me during regular or additional office hours to discuss your research proposal at these early stages. I also encourage appointments with me on the proposal throughout the semester.

10/09 *Constitutional divisions of authority: Presidential vs. parliamentary design*

Required

- Strøm, Kaare. 2000. "Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies." *European Journal of Political Research* 37 (3): 261-290.
- Cheibub, José Antonio. 2002. "Minority Governments, Deadlock Situations, and the

- Survival of Presidential Democracies." *CPS* 35 (3): 284-312.
- Kaare Strøm, Wolfgang C. Müller, and Torbjörn Bergman, eds. 2010. *Cabinets and Coalition Bargaining: The Democratic Life Cycle in Western Europe*. Oxford UP, Chs. 2 and 6, 51-81 and 201-235.
 - Golder, Matt, Sona N. Golder, and David A. Siegel. 2012. "Modeling the Institutional Foundation of Parliamentary Government Formation." *JOP* 74 (2): 427-445.

Recommended

- Available if you need guidance: CM document on basics: voting cycles, Condorcet winner, core, and dimension-by-dimension median.

Classics:

- Laver, Michael, and Norman Schofield. 1998. *Multiparty Government: The Politics of Coalition in Europe*. University of Michigan (Oxford UP 1990), Ch. 5, 89-143.
- Laver, Michael, and Kenneth A. Shepsle. 1990. "Coalitions and Cabinet Government." *APSR* 84 (3): 873-890.

Recent:

- Martin, Lanny W., and Georg Vanberg. 2005. "Coalition Policymaking and Legislative Review." *APSR* 99 (1): 93-106.

Submit to Collab Assignments by 10/16, 11:55 pm: two-page statement of your project's question.

10/16 *Constitutional divisions of authority: Federalism, bicameralism, and judicial review*

Required

- Qian, Yingyi, and Barry R. Weingast. 1997. "Federalism as a Commitment to Preserving Market Incentives." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 11 (4): 83-92.
- Filippov, Mikhail, Peter C. Ordeshook, and Olga Shvetsova. 2004. *Designing Federalism: A Theory of Self-Sustainable Federal Institutions*. Cambridge UP. Skim Ch. 1, 1-41. Read Ch. 2, 42-75.
- VanDusky-Allen, Julie, and William B. Heller. 2014. "Bicameralism and the Logic of Party Organization." *CPS* 47 (5): 715-742.
- Vanberg, Georg. 2000. "Establishing Judicial Independence in West Germany: The Impact of Opinion Leadership and the Separation of Powers." *Comparative Politics* 32 (3): 333-353.

Recommended

- McCubbins, Mathew D., Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast. 1987. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 3 (2): 243-277.
- Bakke, Kristin M., and Erik Wibbels. 2006. "Diversity, Disparity, and Civil Conflict in Federal States." *World Politics* 59 (1): 1-50.

PART TWO: THE EFFECTS OF INSTITUTIONS

10/23 *From divisions of authority to policy*

Required

- Tsebelis, George. 1995. "Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multipartyism." *British Journal of Political Science* 25 (3): 289-325.
- Cox, Gary W. and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2001. "The Institutional Determinants of Economic Policy Outcomes," In Stephan Haggard and Mathew D. McCubbins, eds., *Presidents, Parliaments, and Policy*, Cambridge UP, 21-63.
- Cunningham, David E. 2006. "Veto Players and Civil War Duration." *AJPS* 50 (4): 875-892.
- Gehlbach, Scott, and Edmund J. Malesky. 2010. "The Contribution of Veto Players to Economic Reform." *JOP* 72 (4): 957-975.

Recommended

- Available if you need guidance: CM document on: winsets in formal theory.
- Tsebelis, George. 1999. "Veto Players and Law Production in Parliamentary Democracies: An Empirical Analysis." *APSR* 93 (3): 591-608.
- Keefer, Philip, and David Stasavage. 2003. "The Limits of Delegation: Veto Players, Central Bank Independence, and the Credibility of Monetary Policy." *APSR* 97 (3): 407-423.
- Dragu, Tiberiu, and Jonathan Rodden. 2011. "Representation and Redistribution in Federations." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 108 (21): 8601-8604.

10/30 *The causes and effects of (different forms of) institutions*

Required

- Boix. 2015. *Political Order and Inequality*. Read all (268 pp. without References).

Early drafts of research proposals are due at Collab Assignments by **11/06, 11:55 pm**.

Note: Reading assignments are deliberately somewhat lighter for the remainder of the semester, given work on proposals.

11/06 *The provision of public goods*

Required

- Min. 2015. *Power and the Vote*. Read all (174 pp. without References).

Peer reviews of partners' proposal drafts are due via email (1 copy to your partner, 1 copy to me) by **11/13, 11:55 pm**.

11/13 *Revisiting electoral rules: Scientific debate and knowledge accumulation*

Required

- Boix, Carles. 1999. "Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies." *APSR* 93 (3): 609-624.
- Cusack, Thomas, Torben Iversen, and David Soskice. 2007. "Economic Interests and the Origins of Electoral Systems." *APSR* 101 (3): 373-391.
- Kreuzer, Marcus. 2010. "Historical Knowledge and Quantitative Analysis: The Case of the Origins of Proportional Representation." *APSR* 104 (2): 369-392. *Skim* to identify the principal differences between Kreuzer and the other scholars here.

- Cusack, Thomas, Torben Iversen, and David Soskice. 2010. "Coevolution of Capitalism and Political Representation: The Choice of Electoral Systems." *APSR* 104 (2): 393-403.
- Boix, Carles. 2010. "Electoral Markets, Party Strategies, and Proportional Representation." *APSR* 104 (2): 404-413.

Recommended

- Greif, Avner, and David D. Laitin. 2004. "A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change." *APSR* 98 (4): 633-652.
- Benoit, Kenneth, and Jacqueline Hayden. 2004. "Institutional Change and Persistence: The Evolution of Poland's Electoral System, 1989–2001." *JOP* 66 (2): 396-427.
- Benoit, Kenneth. 2007. "Electoral Laws as Political Consequences: Explaining the Origins and Change of Electoral Institutions." *ARPS* 10: 363-390.

11/20 *Revisiting institutions and inequalities*

By the end of class 11/20, we will settle consensually on those class members who will present and discuss on 11/27, and on those who will present and discuss on two discussants for 12/04.

Required

- Díaz-Cayeros, Alberto, Beatriz Magaloni, and Alexander Ruiz-Euler. 2014. "Traditional Governance, Citizen Engagement, and Local Public Goods: Evidence from Mexico." *World Development* 53: 80-93.
- Dancygier, Rafaela M. 2014. "Electoral Rules or Electoral Leverage? Explaining Muslim Representation in England." *World Politics* 66 (2): 229-263.
- Soss, Joe, and Vesla Weaver. 2017. "Police Are Our Government: Politics, Political Science, and the Policing of Race–Class Subjugated Communities." *ARPS*, 565-591.

Recommended

- Hawkesworth, Mary. 2003. "Congressional Enactments of Race–Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced–Gendered Institutions." *APSR* 97 (4): 529-550.
- Htun, Mala, and Juan Pablo Ossa. 2013. "Political Inclusion of Marginalized Groups: Indigenous Reservations and Gender Parity in Bolivia." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 1 (1): 4-25.
- Baldwin, Kate. 2014. "When Politicians Cede Control of Resources: Land, Chiefs, and Coalition-Building in Africa." *Comparative Politics* 46 (3): 253-271.

11/27 *Research presentations* and

12/04 *Research presentations*

On each of our two days devoted to presentations, a peer discussant will offer comments on the designated research proposal. On each day, after presentations and discussant remarks, we will reserve time for questions and discussion involving the entire class, as well as responses from the presenters. Each day, then, will resemble a a conference panel.

APPENDIX: STATEMENT ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE from the UVa Office of the Dean of Students.

“The University of Virginia is dedicated to providing a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. To that end, it is vital that you know two values that the University and I hold as critically important:

1. Power-based personal violence will not be tolerated.
2. Everyone has a responsibility to do their part to maintain a safe community on Grounds.

If you or someone you know has been affected by power-based personal violence, more information can be found on the UVA Sexual Violence website that describes reporting options and resources available - www.virginia.edu/sexualviolence.

As your professor and as a person, I care about you and your well-being and stand ready to provide support and resources as I can. As a faculty member, I am a responsible employee, which means that I am required by University policy and federal law to report what you tell me to the University's Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator's job is to ensure that the reporting student receives the resources and support that they need, while also reviewing the information presented to determine whether further action is necessary to ensure survivor safety and the safety of the University community. If you would rather keep this information confidential, there are Confidential Employees you can talk to on Grounds (See http://www.virginia.edu/justreportit/confidential_resources.pdf). The worst possible situation would be for you or your friend to remain silent when there are so many here willing and able to help.”