

Comparative Legislatures

PLCP 4200, Spring 2017

Class meets MW 3:30-4:45 pm, Cocke 101

Prof. Mershon

Office hours: MW 5-6 pm, Gibson 382

Course overview. This course focuses on questions of vital importance for democratic political life: legislators, legislative parties, and legislatures translate citizen preferences into public policy. We examine how and why individual legislators and legislative parties make the decisions they do. To investigate how varying political and socioeconomic conditions affect legislatures and legislative decision-making, we compare established and new democracies in Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa. We address such themes as the linkages between citizens and the representatives they elect, the extent to which parties influence legislators' behavior, relationships between the executive and the legislature, and institutional change. As our course nears its end, we extend our comparisons to legislatures in authoritarian regimes.

Course goals. This course pursues five chief goals. Naturally, several aims regard legislatures and legislative decision-making. This course is designed to help you:

- identify major similarities and differences in legislators, legislatures, and legislative decision-making across countries and across sets of countries,
- explain the patterns you observe, and
- articulate why the explanation(s) you find to be persuasive actually hold explanatory power.

The first three goals point to two general ones. The course will equip you to:

- hone your critical and analytical skills and
- gain a scientific perspective on political behavior and phenomena.

Course format. This course operates as a seminar. Thus, each class will combine lecture and ample opportunity for class discussion. In many class meetings, we will have some form of discussion in small groups. The success of all class meetings depends on active engagement of all students enrolled. That statement leads naturally to course requirements.

Course requirements. Course grades are based on the following requirements:

- 20 percent: mid-term exam
- 20 percent: second exam near semester's end
- Bonus: whichever of your exams earns a higher grade will be weighted 21 percent
- 15 percent: overall participation
- 8 percent: 3 separate submissions of draft elements of research paper (each: 2.67 percent)
- Bonus: whichever draft element earns the highest grade will be receive a bonus of 1 percent
- 5 percent: discussions and presentations of in-progress papers, in multiple class meetings
- 10 percent: partial draft of research paper, revising and integrating prior submissions
- 20 percent: research paper

No single category of work weighs unduly in the course grade. All course work is spaced relatively evenly over the semester. These statements hold true even for the research paper, since work on it begins early, occurs in stages, and cumulates over the semester. Each

requirement deserves fuller discussion.

On each of the two blue book *exams*, questions will emphasize concepts and explanatory thinking, not memorization. The first in-class exam, on 03/01, will cover all material since the start of the semester. The second in-class exam, on 04/17, will be cumulative but will emphasize most strongly material since Spring Break.

Your success in this seminar depends on your active *participation* in it. Participating involves not only speaking but also attentively listening to classmates. It is your responsibility as a member of the class to help keep discussion lively, engaged, and focused on the topics at hand. If you believe discussion is lagging or moving off topic, pose a simple question, for instance:

- That's an important comment. How can we link that to the author's argument that XXX?
- That's interesting, and it makes me wonder XXX about our reading YYY for this week.
- Reflecting on the last several points made, I wonder XXX.
- How does this fit in the bigger picture?

These examples do not exhaust the possibilities but instead illustrate how you can contribute proactively to thoughtful class discussions. Moreover, the examples illustrate how you can treat each other respectfully and justly in class. (See the statement on respect and justice below.)

Your work on the *research paper* unfolds in stages, with a separate submission and feedback on it at each stage. Throughout all stages of your work on the paper, be sure to consult documents in the Collab Resources folder entitled, "Resources for Research Papers." To emphasize: you will benefit greatly from reading the documents in that Resources folder. Guidance is available: take advantage of it! A key document, entitled "PLCP 4200 Research Paper Guidelines," summarizes my guidelines for you as you set up, research, and write your papers. Among the topics I treat in that document are how to frame a research question in the form of puzzle, how to frame testable hypotheses and use prior research to develop the logic leading up to each hypothesis, and how to specify the rationale for choosing the types of evidence to be used in your paper. The topics in the "Research Paper Guidelines" align with the content of your 3 paper submissions, discussed below. You will also find in that Collab Resources folder a list of resources for papers on legislatures, a set of relevant URLs, and another faculty member's guidelines on political science papers, which dovetail with my guidelines.

- On three separate occasions, you will submit *draft elements* of your research paper:
 - tentative choice of research area (02/22 at latest)
 - statement of research question (03/18)
 - statement of chief hypotheses, along with types and sources of evidence used to assess hypotheses (04/08)

These 3 submissions are tied to foci of assessment of readings in class discussions. You thus simultaneously appraise assigned readings and equip yourself to work on your research paper.

- In preparation for *presentations and discussions of in-progress papers*, small groups convene on 04/19 among students whose papers share similarities. Collaboration and

brainstorming then will help guide your presentation of your in-progress paper and discussion of others' papers (two days, 04/24 and 04/26, will accommodate everyone). It will be wise to include in the conclusions of your presentation a few key remaining challenges on your paper, which will structure helpful feedback.

- The *partial draft of the research paper*, due Wednesday, 05/03, 11:55 pm, allows you to revise and integrate the elements of your paper that you have submitted earlier. Reflect on the feedback you have received from me and in class, as well on your continuing work. Where should you expand and where should you trim? Re-read and revise again. Is your writing as concise and precise as possible? Choose an apt, informative paper title and include a few tentative conclusions, which, although preliminary, will enable me to offer feedback that you can incorporate into your final paper. The partial draft should be double-spaced and paginated, and should have a minimum of 1,600 words and a maximum of 2,000 words, excluding references and any tables or figures. (Use Tools > Word Count in MS Word; this length is 6.5 to 8+ pages, assuming Times New Roman 12-point font.) The word count rule puts everyone on a level playing field, of obvious importance.

If you have aspects of the paper draft that you cannot polish to your satisfaction, keep a record that you can exploit as a resource for your last stage of work on the paper. What are your key challenges, and how can you best tackle them? Be sure to email me and/or make an appointment with me if you need to.

- The *final research paper* is due at the latest Thursday, 05/11, 5:00 pm. Think carefully about how to build on your partial draft and how to respond to suggestions received from me and from your classmates. Again: revise, refine, re-read, flesh out or trim where needed, and re-read once more. Is your central research question genuinely puzzling? Are your hypotheses as clearly and logically developed as they can be? Do you show that your evidence is appropriate for evaluating your hypotheses? Is your interpretation of evidence judicious and fair? Do your conclusions not only recapitulate what you have done but also discuss broader implications? The research paper should be double-spaced and paginated, and should have a minimum of 3,500 words and a maximum of 4,000 words (14.5-16.5 pages, assuming Times New Roman 12-point font), excluding references and any tables or figures.

Course rules and policies. The following rules and policies are designed to help you benefit as much as possible from taking the class, interacting with fellow students, and interacting with me as the professor. The rules and policies are designed to help you learn.

- Attendance: I will not take official attendance, but if you do not attend class you will not be able to participate in in-class discussion. For each class you do not attend, your learning and your course grade will suffer.
- Phones: Send your last text before class starts, and then, shortly before 3:30 pm, silence your cellphones and put them away.
- Laptops: In our first class meeting on 01/18, we will discuss several possibilities for policy on use of laptops in our classroom. All students will be individually and collectively responsible for abiding by that policy for the remainder of the semester.

Statement on equality of respect and equality of justice. All class members are expected to treat each other at all times with respect, courtesy, tolerance, fairness, and justice. I strive to assure that students in this class are treated with equal respect and equal justice. As part of that effort, I identify my office as a safe haven for anyone who believes she or he is being treated with prejudice or injustice. Moreover, I view it as my 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 the Appendix to the syllabus.

Statement on academic integrity. I quote extensively from Prof. Bloomfield of the UVa Department of Physics, who offers this eloquent statement as part of his syllabus for Physics 1060, How Things Work (<http://rabi.phys.virginia.edu/1060/2015/ethics.html>).

“In a community dedicated to scholarship and learning, there is no substitute for academic and intellectual integrity. Honesty and forthrightness are essential pillars upon which our enterprise rests and, without them, there can be no trust and little community. All participants in this course are therefore expected to conduct themselves honestly and forthrightly at all times. Truth is the coin of our realm and that truth applies not only to words, facts, and ideas, but also to the authorship of those items. Misrepresentation of authorship is a form of intellectual dishonesty known as plagiarism and intolerable.”

I agree with this statement wholeheartedly and cannot think of a way to improve on it. Moreover, I put in writing the following expectations.

- I hold each student in this class responsible for knowing what actions violate the Honor System at this University.
- I hold each student responsible for abiding by the Honor System.

As class members, we all have a collective responsibility to uphold academic and intellectual integrity.

Readings. The following books are required readings and are available in the UVa Bookstore.

- Barnes, Tiffany D. 2016. *Gendering Legislative Behavior*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carey, John M. 2009. *Legislative Voting and Accountability*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cox, Gary W. 2005 [1987]. *The Efficient Secret: The Cabinet and the Development of Political Parties in Victorian England*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Other readings are downloadable from our course website at Collab Resources. If at any point you have any difficulty locating readings, email me as soon as possible. When a set of articles is assigned, please read assignments in the order listed on the syllabus: I have identified a logical sequence in the week's readings.

Class Meeting Topics and Reading Assignments

01/18 *Introduction*

Part One: Legislatures in Today's Established Democracies: Rules, Actors, and Behavior

01/23 *Rules and legislative behavior: Comparisons in the US*

- Gamm, Gerald, and Kenneth Shepsle. 1989. "Emergence of Legislative Institutions: Standing Committees in the House and Senate, 1810-1825." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 14 (1): 39-66.
- Wittrock, Jill N., Stephen C. Nemeth, Howard Sanborn, Brian DiSarro, and Peverill Squire. 2008. "The Impact of the Australian Ballot on Member Behavior in the US House of Representatives." *Political Research Quarterly* 61 (3): 434-444.
 - At Collab Resources: a non-required 2-page reading offers guidance on the Wittrock et al. use of quantitative methods; you will likely find this helpful if you lack background in statistics. Bring any remaining questions to class!

At least one small group today will compare the framing of research questions in our articles.

01/25 *Legislative behavior and partisan realignment in the US*

- Jenkins, Jeffery A., Justin Peck, and Vesla M. Weaver. 2010. "Between Reconstructions: Congressional Action on Civil Rights, 1891–1940." *Studies in American Political Development* 24 (1): 57-89.

01/30 *The rise of party-disciplined legislators in the United Kingdom, I*

- Cox 2005 (1987), Preface and Chapters 1-5, xiii-44.
 - At Collab Resources: a non-required 1-page reading offers guidance on Cox's use of quantitative methods. If you have questions on the methods, go to the 1-pager and, again, bring any remaining questions to class.

At least one small group today will address Cox's framing of research questions.

02/01 *The rise of party-disciplined legislators in the UK, II*

- Cox 2005 (1987), Chapters 6-8, 45-87.

02/06 *The rise of party-oriented voters in the UK, I*

- Cox 2005 (1987), Chapters 9-11, 91-147.
 - At Collab Resources: a non-required 2-page reading offers guidance on Cox's use of quantitative methods in Chapters 9-11. If you have questions on the methods, go here. This document also covers methods used in Chapter 12, assigned 02/08.

02/08 *The rise of party-oriented voters in the UK, II*

- Cox 2005 (1987), Chapters 12-13, 148-170.
 - Recall that the non-required short reading for 02/06 also covers methods used in Chapter 12.

02/13 *How do electoral laws affect election outcomes? Examples in and beyond the UK*

- Watson, Mike. 2001. *Year Zero: An Inside View of the Scottish Parliament*. Edinburgh:

Polygon. Preface, Chapters 1-2, xi-xiii, 1-26.

- Bohrer, Robert E. and Glen S. Krutz. 2004. "Duverger and Devolution: A Note on the Effects of New Electoral Rules in the UK." *Electoral Studies* 23 (2): 315-327.
- Two short case studies in Andrew Reynolds, Ben Reilly, and Andrew Ellis, eds. 2005. *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance:
 - (1) Patidar, Vijay. 2005. "India: First Past the Post on a Grand Scale," 39-42.
 - (2) Cox, Karen. 2005. "Japan: Adapting to a New Electoral System," 114-116.

At least one small group today will address the framing of research questions and/or hypotheses in the Bohrer-Krutz reading.

02/15 *How and how much do multi-party executives control legislative business?*

- Cox, Gary W., Mikitaka Masuyama, and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2000. "Agenda Power in the Japanese House of Representatives." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 1 (1): 1-21.
- Cox, Gary W., William B. Heller, and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2008. "Agenda Power in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, 1988-2000." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 33 (2): 171-198.
 - At Collab Resources: a non-required 1-page reading offers guidance on quantitative methods used in this week's readings. If you have questions on methods, go here!

Small groups today will focus on the fit between hypotheses (also called propositions or predictions in our readings) and evidence.

Between Wednesday, 02/15, 5 pm, and **Wednesday, 02/22, 11:55 pm**, submit to Collab Assignments one short paragraph on your **tentative choice of research area** for your research paper. It is fine if you have two tentative research areas, or if you have an area without a geographic focus: the goal is to set out your tentative ideas as best you can, for now, so as to get feedback and refine your ideas. (Here as for all paper submissions: see "Research Paper Guidelines" in the Collab Resources folder, "Resources for Research Papers.")

Part Two: Legislative Voting, Democratic Accountability, and Democratic Representation

02/20 *How is voting in legislatures linked to accountability and representation? An introduction*

- Carey 2009, Preface and Chapter 1, parts 2.1 and 2.2 of Chapter 2, ix-29. Skim Appendix, 177-179.

At least one small group today will discuss Carey's framing of research questions.

02/22 *Party-dominated vs. individual accountability*

- Carey 2009, remainder of Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, 29-67.

Small groups today will work with transcripts of Carey's interviews. Each group will choose one or two countries, discuss the interviews as evidence, and discuss links between the interviews, on the one hand, and, on the other, the figures and discussion in Chs. 2 and 3.

- 02/27 *Visible legislative votes: implications for party-dominated and individual accountability*
- Carey 2009, Chapter 4, 68-91.
- Small groups from 02/22 will reconvene, discussing links between interviews and Chs. 2, 3, and now 4. Groups will also discuss the degree to which interviews support the hypotheses (or propositions) in Ch. 4.

03/01 **FIRST IN-CLASS BLUE BOOK EXAM.**
Bring blue books. You must pledge your exam.

03/06 and 03/08 No class: Spring Break.

- 03/13 *Further implications of legislative voting: party voting unity*
- Carey 2009, Chapter 5, 92-124. (Skimming chapter's appendixes suffices.)

- 03/15 *What explains party voting unity? What affects the tension—and the balance—between individual and collective accountability?*
- Carey 2009, Chapters 6-7, 125-176.

Between Monday, 03/13, 5 pm, and **Saturday, 03/18, 11:55 pm**, submit to Collab Assignments a 2- to 3-paragraph **statement of the research question** anchoring your course research paper. (Here as for all paper submissions: see “Research Paper Guidelines” in the Research Paper folder at Collab Resources.)

- 03/20 *The legislative representation of underrepresented groups*
- Htun, Mala. 2004. "Is Gender Like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups." *Perspectives on Politics* 2 (3): 439-458.

Part Three: Frontiers of Research on Legislatures

- 03/22 *Why, since legislators compete to win office, do they collaborate once in office?*
- Barnes 2016, Chapters 1 and first part of Chapter 2, 1-36.

- 03/27 *Legislative collaboration: presenting the expectations and documenting the patterns*
- Barnes 2016, remainder of Chapters 2 and Chapter 3, 36-77.
- Small groups today will focus on the development of logic culminating in Barnes' hypotheses (or expectations), the sources of evidence, and the fit so far between hypotheses and evidence.

- 03/29 *Why do women legislators collaborate?*
- Barnes 2016, Chapter 4, 78-115. (Skimming the chapter's appendixes suffices.)

- 04/03 *When do women legislators collaborate?*
- Barnes, Chapter 5, 116-142. (Skimming the chapter's appendixes suffices.)

Between Monday, 04/03, 5 pm, and **Saturday, 04/08, 11:55 pm**, submit to Collab Assignments a document that frames your paper's chief **hypotheses** and develops the **logic** leading up to each hypothesis; include the **types and sources of evidence** you plan to use to assess hypotheses, with a brief rationale for the selection of evidence. Your submission should be from 1,000 to 1,300 words (4 to 5.5 pages, assuming Times New Roman 12-point font). As an appendix, give a single-spaced, partial, and tentative list of at least 5 **references** for your paper. (Here as for all paper submissions: see "Research Paper Guidelines.")

04/05 *When do women legislators collaborate, and how much does marginalization motivate collaboration beyond Argentina?*

- Barnes, Chapter 6 and bulk of Chapter 7, 143-203. (Skimming chapter appendixes suffices.)

Continue reading even though class does NOT MEET. Professor Mershon is attending a professional conference.

04/08 Statement of hypotheses and evidence: Due at latest **11:55 pm**, Collab Assignments. For details, see top this page and "Research Paper Guidelines."

04/10 *Lessons on legislative collaboration*

- Barnes, remainder of Chapter 7 and Chapter 8, 203-235.

04/12 *Legislatures in authoritarian regimes: Why bother?*

- Gandhi, Jennifer. 2008. *Political Institutions Under Dictatorship*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Introduction, xv-xxiv.
- Manion, Melanie. 2014. "Authoritarian Parochialism: Local Congressional Representation in China." *The China Quarterly*, 218: 311-338.

04/17 **SECOND IN-CLASS BLUE BOOK EXAM.**

Bring blue books. You must pledge your exam.

04/19 *Group projects on paper presentations*

Small groups will form among students whose research papers share similarities. Collaborate by, for instance, offering tips on helpful sources you have located, refining hypotheses, and exchanging ideas for presentations.

4/24 *Research papers: presentations and discussion*

Roughly half of students will make brief presentations of in-progress research papers (e.g., 5 minutes), with ample time reserved for discussion and feedback. Exact time allocations will depend on final class enrollment (not the time of writing of the syllabus).

04/26 *Research papers: presentations and discussion*

Roughly half of students will make brief presentations of in-progress research papers (e.g., 5 minutes), with ample time reserved for discussion and feedback.

05/01 *Conclusions*

A few short readings TBA.

05/03 Submit via Collab Assignments a **draft of your research paper** by **Wednesday, 05/03, 11:55 pm.**

Revise, refine, and integrate elements of the paper already submitted. Include a title and a draft of tentative conclusions. For more guidance, see p. 3 here and see the “Research Paper Guidelines” in Research Paper folder at Collab Resources.

05/10 Submit at Collab Assignments **your final research paper** by **Thursday, 05/11, 5:00 pm.**

For guidance, see p. 3 here and see the “Research Paper Guidelines” in Research Paper folder at Collab Resources. The due date and time coincide with what would have been the end of exam time for our class, if we had had a final exam.

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.”