

Georgetown University

GOVT 468

Political Institutions and Governance

Instructor:

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Class:

Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-1:45

Course Description

This course will provide comparative and theoretical analyses of democratic political institutions. Political institutions are conceived as “the rules of the game”; basically, they establish the domains of public activity, the procedures to select leaders and the rules to make collective decisions. Different rules induce political actors to develop diverse strategies producing different outcomes. We will examine both the origins of the different institutional formulas and their consequences for policy-making, governmental performance, and democratic stability. Major topics include the foundations of political communities at city, state, continental and global levels; the diffusion of democracy in the world; the role of political parties in elections and in government formation; the relations between the executive and the legislative; electoral systems and other forms of representation and decision-making. We will also address the evolution, change and reforms of institutions in the world in a long-term perspective.

Course Requirements

- Weekly exercises and presentations in class (40%)
- Final paper or take-home exam (60%)

Paper projects must be discussed and approved by the instructor.

Grades: A>90; A->80; B+>70; B>60; B->50; C+>40; C>30; C->20; F>10.

Main Reference Books

Josep M. Colomer A. *The Science of Politics*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Josep M. Colomer B. *Political Institutions: Democracy and Social Choice*. Oxford University Press, 2003.

Some basic reference readings are indicated below. Readings to be presented and discussed in class are provided in the Blackboard, in most cases as journal articles or book chapters which usually summarize full-fledged books by the same authors. Larger bibliography is provided in the two reference books above and will be updated in class; they will also be necessary for writing a term paper.

1/9-14

1 – Introduction:

The role of institutions for democratic governance

- Colomer B. Chapter 1
- o Douglass North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge University Press 1990.
- o Kenneth A. Shepsle, “Institutional Equilibrium and Equilibrium Institutions”, in Herbert Weisberg ed., *Political Science: The Science of Politics*. Agathon, 1986.
- o Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton University Press, 2004.

1/16-21

2 – Polity: State and Nation Building

- Colomer A, chapter 5
- o Alesina, Alberto, and Enrico Spolaore. *The Size of Nations*, The MIT Press, 2005.
- o Colomer, *Great Empires, Small Nations: The Uncertain Future of the Sovereign State*. Routledge, 2007.

1/23-28

3 – Polity: Federation, and Global Government

- Colomer A, chapter 6
- o Robert Goodin, “World Government is Here”, Chapter 8 in *Varieties of Sovereignty and Citizenship*, S. R. Ben-Porath and R. M. Smith, eds. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.
- o Colomer, 2014. Book ms. *The Rulers of the World*. (it also includes larger bibliography).

1/30-2/4

4 - Dictatorship

- Colomer A, chapter 7
- o Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. Crown, 2012.
- o Marta Reynal-Querol, “Does Democracy Preempt Civil Wars?”, *European Journal of Political Economy*, 21, 2005: 445–465.
- o Sthathis Kalyvas and Laia Balcells, *International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict*”, *American Political Science Review*, 104, 3, 2010: 415-429.

2/6-11

5 – Democracy

- Colomer A, chapter 8
- o Amartya Sen, Development and Freedom. Oxford University Press, 2000.
- o Adam Przeworski et al, Democracy and Development, Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- o Barry R. Weingast, “The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law”, The American Political Science Review, 91: 2, 1997: 245-263.

2/13-18

6 - Political Parties

- Colomer A, chapter 9
- o Colomer, “On the Origins of Electoral Systems and Political Parties”, Electoral Studies, 2007.
- o John A. Aldrich. Why Parties? Yale University Press, 1995.

2/20-25

7 - Electoral Competition

- Colomer A, chapter 10
- o Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy. Harper and Row, 1957.
- o Melvin J. Hinich, and Michael C. Munger. Analytical Politics. Cambridge University Press. 1997.
- o Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, The Predictioneer’s Game, 2010

2/27-3/4

8 – Agenda Formation

- Colomer A, chapter 11
- o William H. Riker, ed. 1993. Agenda Formation. University of Michigan Press.
- o Gary Miller & Norman Schofield, “Activists and Partisan Realignment in the United States”, American Political Science Review, 97: 2, 2003: 245-360.

3/6-18

9 - Party Systems

- Colomer A, chapter 12
- o John D. Huber and G. Bingham Powell, “Congruence Between Citizens and Policymakers in Two Visions of Liberal Democracy”, World Politics, 46, 3, 1994: 291-326.
- o Simon Bornschier, “The New Cultural Divide and the Two-Dimensional Political Space in Western Europe”, West European Politics, 33, 3, 2010: 419-444.

3/20-25

10 – Majority Rule

- Colomer A, chapter 13
- Colomer B, chapter 3.1

- o Gabriel L. Negretto, “Choosing How to Choose Presidents: Parties, Military Rulers, and Presidential Elections in Latin America”, *The Journal of Politics*, 68: 2, 2006: 421–433.
- o Karen L. Remmer, “The Politics of Institutional Change: Electoral Reform in Latin America”, *Party Politics*, 14:1, 2008: 5-30.

3/27-4/1

11 – Proportional Representation

- Colomer A, chapter 14
- Colomer B, chapter 3.2

- o Colomer, “It’s the Parties that Choose Electoral Systems (Or Duverger’s laws Upside-down)”, *Political Studies*, 2005.
- o Gary Cox, *Making Votes Count*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- o Rein Taagepera, *Predicting Party Sizes. The Logic of Simple Electoral Systems*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

4/3-8

12 - Division of Powers

- Colomer A, chapter 15
- Colomer B, chapter 4

- o Colomer, “Equilibrium Institutions: The Federal-Proportional Trade Off”, *Public Choice*, 158, 3-4, 2014: 559–576.
- o Thomas H. Hammond, and Gary J. Miller. “The Core of the Constitution.” *American Political Science Review*, 81, 1987.
- o Kenneth Krehbiel, *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*, The University of Chicago Press, 1998.

4/10-15

13 - Party Government

- Colomer A, chapter 16

- o Colomer, “The More Parties, the Greater Policy Stability”, *European Political Science*, 2011.
- o Laver Michael, and Norman Schofield (1990). 2003. *Multiparty Government*. Oxford University Press.
- o Carlos Pereira & Marcus A. Melo, “The Surprising Success of Multiparty Presidentialism”, *Journal of Democracy*, 23: 3, 2012: 156-170.

4/22-24

14 – Conclusion: Democracy, Governance, and Institutions

- Colomer B, chapter 5

o Colomer, “Disequilibrium Institutions and Pluralist Democracy”, *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 13:3, 2001: 235–247.

o Colomer, “Comparative Constitutions”, in R. Goodin ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, 2007.