

# ELECTIONS IN THE MODERN WORLD

POL SCI 377  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Fall 2015  
TR 2:00-3:15 pm  
Room: Chemistry 197

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Office: Bolton 670  
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Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3pm (or by  
appointment)

**Prerequisites:** Junior standing, Comparative Politics course

## Course Description:

Elections have become a near universal phenomenon in the modern world. In democracies, elections are the primary means of linking citizens to the government. In many new democracies, elections aspire to this function, but often fall short. Meanwhile, elections in modern authoritarian regimes serve functions that have little to do with representation and accountability. This course considers the promise and practice of elections in the modern world.

Rather than surveying every conceivable aspect of electoral politics in the modern world, this course focuses on a single question: what are the conditions that allow elections to serve as effective mechanisms of representation and accountability? It begins by considering the representation and accountability as theoretical constructs. Why is representation a good thing? Why is accountability? What types of institutions facilitate successful electoral representation and accountability? The course then proceeds to consider how elections in new democracies succeed and fail in fulfilling these functions. We then examine the role of elections in authoritarian regimes. Why do autocrats hold elections? What special functions do elections under autocracy serve? The final sections of the course consider how electoral authoritarian regimes breakdown. Why do these regimes collapse? And what role to elections play in their downfall?

## Course Objectives:

In this course you will:

1. Become familiar with the intellectual history of elections
2. Gain an understanding of the role that elections play in modern democracy
3. Learn about two important concepts: accountability and representation
4. Become an expert on the ways that democratic elections can be undermined
5. Become familiar with the form and function of elections in authoritarian regimes
6. Learn about how electoral authoritarian regimes break down
7. gain 'real-world' knowledge about elections in both democracies and non-democracies
8. use the analytic toolkit of social science to examine the conduct of elections

## Requirements:

- 1) Attend class sessions and participate

The format of this class will be discussion. Your participation includes both attendance and engagement in class discussion.

I will lecture at times, but most of our class time will be spent discussing the themes and arguments presented in our readings. Everyone should be ready to contribute something in every class. Your comments need not dazzle every time. Often times, the most productive contributions to class

discussions are questions. If you don't understand something in the readings, say so. The authors we read are not perfect; their prose may not always be clear and their arguments will never be bulletproof. Speak up and air your grievances if you are confused. We will all be better for it and you will be rewarded come evaluation time.

Attendance is mandatory. Our class is small, and therefore, you cannot free ride on your fellow classmates. Your absences will be noticed by all and have a palpable impact on our sessions. Each unexcused absence will result in the reduction of your participation grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. Absences will only be excused for documented illness, family crises, religious observances etc.

Late Policy: You are expected to arrive to class on time unless you have a valid excuse. It is disruptive and disrespectful to arrive to class late. If you are not present when I take roll at the beginning of class, you will be marked as absent for the day unless you have a documented excuse for your tardiness.

Your class participation grade will be based upon three equal components: 1/3 will be based on reading quizzes (see below), 1/3 will be based on participation in class, and 1/3 will be based on attendance.

- 2) Complete assigned readings before the date indicated on the syllabus.

In order to participate effectively in discussion, you will need to have done the required readings for that day. Much is expected in terms of reading, but you are up to the task.

Each week I will post on D2L a short list of questions that you should keep in mind while doing the next week's readings. These questions will help facilitate discussion on a given reading. On some, but likely not all, class days we will begin class with a short quiz. These quizzes will contain one question drawn from that week's questions. Grades of "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" will be assigned.

- 3) Complete response papers

You will be responsible for writing two 2-4 page response papers over the course of the semester. The response papers will be written on the readings with a "\*" next to them on the syllabus.

These papers should have three components:

- 1) The paper should briefly (one paragraph) sum up the main argument made by the author and the evidence provided.
- 2) It should contain an evaluation and critique of the author's argument and evidence. Does the author's argument make sense? Why or why not? Does his evidence (if any) comport with his/her argument? Why or why not? Do you know of other evidence that undermines (or supports) the author's argument? Does one of the other readings for that day offer a perspective that is discordant with the perspective offered by the author? This section should constitute the lion's share of the paper.
- 3) The paper should conclude with some questions for the class that flow from your evaluation/critique.

You will give a short 5-minute presentation on your paper to kick off our discussion of that reading. Students are encouraged to be creative in the presentational style. Students will be evaluated on how well they are able to generate discussion of their reading.

Each week we will determine who will write reaction papers for the following week. I will ask for volunteers.

4) Prepare for and participate in our in-class debate--- October 15

For this debate, the class will be divided into four teams. In order to prepare for this debate you will be required to prepare a 1-page 'position paper' that lays out why you think the position you are defending is the correct one and why the opposition position is incorrect. This individual position paper is due in class on October 8. You will also be required to meet with your debate team once outside of class. More specific instructions will be distributed in the weeks prior to the debate. The topic of the debate will be determined in the coming weeks.

5) One Final Paper

One of your most important assignments in this class will be a 10-15 page analytic paper. In this paper, you will write a theoretically informed analysis of a specific election that has taken place in the last 10 years *outside* the United States. Your paper will focus on no more than *two* specific 'problems' in that election (it may focus on just one).

You may choose to focus on any of the following 'problems':

- Lack of accountability
- Poor or unequal representation of voter preferences
- Low turnout
- Low levels of competition
- Underrepresentation of women
- Underrepresentation of minorities
- Weak political parties
- Electoral fraud
- Unfair use of state resources
- Vote buying
- Voter coercion
- Violence

Alternatively, you may choose your own topic and have it approved by me.

The paper should consist of three parts. The first part should contain a brief (1-2 page) overview of the election in that country. The second part should contain a statement and analysis of the problem(s) being analyzed (4-5 pages). In the third part of the paper, you will draw on the scholarly literature and your own judgment to suggest solutions to the problem being analyzed (3-4 pages). The research paper should be no less than 2800 words and may draw upon a combination of primary and secondary sources.

In September, I will solicit individual appointments with each of you to discuss your topic. I will ask you to think about your topic before coming to that meeting. Then, on October 13, you will submit a topic to me in writing.

On November 5, I will ask each of you to submit a written mid-term progress report on your research. At a minimum, this progress report should consist of an annotated outline and list of sources. If you would like to turn in an early draft of the paper at this time, I will provide comments.

A complete final draft of the paper will be due on December 3. This draft will be evaluated separately from subsequent revisions and will constitute the primary grade on the paper. I will read all of your papers and provide comments for revision.

The final revision of your paper will be due by email to me on December 20. NOTE: This is not a revision to change the final grade on your complete draft. Only your revisions will be graded for this component.

6) One Midterm exam

In-class on October 29. This exam will cover material in the first part of the course.

7) One Final Exam.

To be held on Thursday December 17 at 12:30pm. The exam is not cumulative. It covers material in the second part of the course.

### **Academic Honesty:**

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee's policies on academic honesty. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course and any plagiarism on any assignment will result in a failing grade for the course.

*When in doubt, cite.* If you have questions about attribution, please see me. I am here to help! More information is available at: <http://www4.uwm.edu/dos/conduct/academic-misconduct.cfm>

### **Evaluation:**

Class Attendance, Reading Quizzes, and Participation: 25%

Response Papers and Discussion Leadership: 10%

Debate Position Paper and Participation: 5%

Mid-term exam: 17.5%

Final exam 17.5%

Final Paper Progress Report: 5%

Final Paper Final Draft: 15%

Final Paper Revisions: 5%

**GRADING SCALE:**

100-93	A	77-73	C
92-90	A-	72-70	C-
89-88	B+	69-68	D+
87-83	B	67-63	D
82-80	B-	62-60	D-
79-78	C+	59-0	F

**Required Texts for Purchase:**

Manin, Bernard. 1997. *Principles of Representative Government*

Le Duc, Lawrence, Richard G. Niemi, and Pippa Norris. 2014. *Comparing Democracies 4*. London: Sage.

All other readings listed on the syllabus be made available on D2L or are available at the weblink provided on the syllabus.

**Late Assignment Policy**

All assignments are due on the assigned date. Response papers are due on the day that a reading is covered in class. I do not accept late assignments. Exceptions are made only in the most severe and extraordinary circumstances.

**Expected Time Commitment:**

This is a three-credit course, so the expected time commitment from students is approximately 144 hours. Students will spend 40 hours in class over the course of the semester. Approximately 50% of the remaining time will be spent preparing for class by doing assigned readings and reviewing previous lecture notes. A further 25% will be spent preparing for quizzes and exams. Students should expect to allocate the final 25% to writing the final paper.

**Academic Honesty:**

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's academic misconduct policy. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course and any plagiarism on any assignment will result in a failing grade for the course. *When in doubt, cite.* If you have questions about attribution, please see me. I am here to help! More information is available at [http://www.uwm.edu/acad\\_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm](http://www.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm)

University Policies (<http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf>)

[NOTE: ALL READINGS ON THIS SYLLABUS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. I WILL NOTIFY YOU IN ADVANCE BY EMAIL AND/OR IN CLASS IF A CHANGE IS MADE PLEASE CONSULT THE D2L VERSION OF THE SYLLABUS BEFORE DOING YOUR READINGS. ]

## **PART I: THE PROMISE OF ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY**

**September 3**-Introduction and Overview

**September 8-The Pre-History of Elections**—Lot vs election. Ancient Greece. Florence. The Enlightenment.

Required:

\*Manin, Bernard. 1997 *Principles of Representative Government*, pg 1-44, 54-63, 67-93

**September 10-Modern Elections**—The principle of distinction. The foundations of representation. Why is representation a good thing? Why representation? Are elections inherently aristocratic?

Required:

\*Manin, Bernard. 1997. *Principles of Representative Government*, pg 94-149

**September 15 Democracy and Elections** –Modern electoral democracy. What is a democracy? What makes elections democratic?

Required:

\*Manin, Bernard. 1997. *Principles of Representative Government*, pg 161-192

\*Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. “What Democracy Is...and Is Not,” *Journal of Democracy*. 2(3): 75-88

**September 17 Electoral Systems**—An overview of the world’s major electoral systems. Proportional representation. First past the post systems. Electoral thresholds. District Magnitude.

Required:

*Comparing Democracies 4*, Chapter 2

**September 22 and September 24**—No Class!

**September 29—The Effects of Electoral Systems: Strategic Voting and Disproportionality**—What are the effects of electoral systems on who gets elected? The mechanical and psychological effects of electoral systems.

\*Donovan, Todd and Shaun Bowler. 2004. *Reforming the Republic: Democratic Institutions for the New America*. Chapter 3-4.

Horowitz, Donald. 2003. "Electoral Systems: A Primer for Decision Makers" *Journal of Democracy*.

**October 1 Representation and Accountability**—Two visions of electoral linkages. Pros and cons of representation and accountability as linkage mechanisms.

Required:

\*Manin, Bernard, Adam Przeworski, and Susan Stokes. 1999. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Chapter 1, pp 29-54.

\*Fearon, James. "Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians: Selecting Good Types versus Sanctioning Poor Performance" 1999 in Manin, Bernard, Adam Przeworski, and Susan Stokes. 1999. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Chapter 2, pp 55-70 and 82-83.

## **PART II: DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN PRACTICE**

**October 6 Electoral Rules and Representation**—Congruence between citizens and policymakers. Clarity of responsibility.

Required:

\*Powell, Bingham 1989. "Constitutional Design and Citizen Electoral Control" *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1(2).

\*Bingham G. Powell Jr and Georg S. Vanberg. 2000. "Election Laws, Disproportionality and Median Correspondence: Implications for Two Visions of Democracy." *British Journal of Political Science* 30(3): 383-411.

**October 8 Voter turnout**—Why is voter participation important in a democracy? What are the determinants of voter turnout?

Required:

\*Arend Lijphart. 1997. "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma," *American Political Science Review*, 91, pp. 1-14.

*Comparing Democracies* 4, Chapter 4

**October 13 Equality**—Money and elections. Income inequality as a threat to equal representation?

\*Gilens, Martin and Benjamin Page. 2014. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics*

\*Bartels, Larry. 2008. *Unequal Democracy*. Chapter 9

**October 15 In-class Debate**

**October 20—Representation of Women and Minorities**—Descriptive vs substantive representation. Is descriptive representation a good thing? Electoral institutions and minority representation

Comparing Democracies 4, Chapter 6

\*Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent 'Yes'" *Journal of Politics*

**October 22 Economic Voting**—How does the economy affect the vote? When do voters hold politicians accountable for the economy? Retrospective voting.

Required:

Comparing Democracies 4, Chapter 7

\*Duch, Raymond. 2002. "A Developmental Model of Heterogeneous Economic Voting in New Democracies." *American Political Science Review*

**October 27---Electoral Competition**—The role of the opposition. Is competition a good thing?

\*Besley, Tim and Burgess, Robin. 2002. The Political Economy of Government Responsiveness: Theory and Evidence from India, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 117/4.

\*Hobolt, Sara Binzer and Robert Klemmensen. 2008. "Government Responsiveness and Political Competition in Comparative Perspective" *Comparative Political Studies*. 41(3): 309-337.

**October 29—Mid Term**

**November 3 —Elections, Political Parties, and Accountability**—How do stable political parties facilitate representation and accountability? Individual vs collective accountability What is an institutionalized party system?

Required:



\*Mainwaring, Scott. 1999. *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization*. Stanford: Stanford UP. Selection TBD

\*Zielinski, Jakub, Kazmierz M. Slomczynski and Goldie Shabad. 2005. "Electoral Control in New Democracies: The Perverse Incentives of Fluid Party Systems" *World Politics*. 57(3).

## **PART III: HOW ELECTIONS ARE UNDERMINED**

**November 5 Electoral Integrity** Electoral fraud. Why is it employed in some settings, but not others? Detecting electoral fraud.

Required:

Comparing Democracies 4, Chapter 9

\*Simpser, Alberto. 2013. Why Governments and Parties Manipulate Elections. Chapter 1.

**November 10 Vote Buying**—What is vote buying? Commitment problems. Ballot secrecy. Is it undemocratic? Vote buying vs turnout buying.

\*Schaffer, Frederic Charles, ed. 2007. *Elections for Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying*. Chapters 2-3, pp17-45

\*Stokes, Susan. 2005. "Perverse Accountability: A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence from Argentina" *American Political Science Review*

**November 12 Electoral Coercion** Political pressure in the workplace. Why and when do employers apply pressure on their employees?

\*Frye, Timothy, Ora John Reuter, and David Szakonyi. 2015. "Hitting Them With Carrots: Voter Intimidation and Vote Buying in Russia" Working Paper.

\*Mares, Isabella and Boliang Zhu. 2015. "Electoral Intimidation" *Comparative Politics*.

**November 17 Elections and Violence**—Can multiparty elections be held too early? Post-election violence. Ethnic violence.

Required:

\*Snyder, Jack. 2000. *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*. New York: Norton, pp. 15-43

\*Dercon, Stefan and Roxana Gutierrez. 2012. "Triggers and Characteristics of the 2007 Kenyan Electoral Violence" *World Development*

## **PART IV: AUTHORITARIAN ELECTIONS**

**November 19 Elections under Authoritarianism** What makes an election free and fair? Hybrid regimes. An introduction to autocratic elections.

Required:

\*Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. 2002. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2): 51-65.

Comparing Democracies 4, Chapter 10

**November 25: Why hold elections?** --The logic of authoritarian elections. Why do authoritarian leaders hold elections? Cooptation. Elite management

Required:

\*Lust-Okar E. 2009. "Legislative Elections in Hegemonic Authoritarian Regimes in *Democratization by Elections: A New Mode of Transition*..

\*Blaydes, Lisa. 2008. "Authoritarian Elections and Elite Management: Theory and Evidence from Egypt" Working Paper. Available Online:  
<http://www.princeton.edu/~piirs/Dictatorships042508/Blaydes.pdf>

**December 1 Elections and Regime Longevity**—Can authoritarian elections lead to regime change? Liberalizing elections.

Required:

\*Lindberg, Staffan I. 2006. *Democracy and Elections in Africa*." Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. Chapter Four: "The Self-Reinforcing Power of Elections

\*Pop-Eleches, Grigore and Graeme Robertson. 2015. "Elections, Information, and Political Change in the Post-Cold War Era." *Comparative Politics*

**December 3 The Breakdown of Electoral Authoritarianism: Domestic Factors**—What is the role of the opposition in the breakdown of electoral authoritarianism? Opposition unity. State capacity. Ruling parties.

\*Howard, Marc Morje, and Philip Roessler. 2006. “Liberalizing Electoral Outcomes in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (2): 365-81.

\*Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*. New York: Cambridge Selections

**December 8 The Breakdown of Electoral Authoritarianism: International Influences**—Diffusion. The role of the West.

\*Beissinger, Mark. 2007. Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions. *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (2): 259-76.

\*Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way. 2006. “Linkage and Leverage: How Do International Factors Change Domestic Balances of Power” in *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition*.

**December 10 The Breakdown of Electoral Authoritarianism: New Media**—What is the role of the internet? Social media. Does new media break down barriers to collective action? Freedom of information.

\*Reuter, Ora John and David Szakonyi. 2015. “Online Social Media and Political Awareness in Authoritarian Regimes” *British Journal of Political Science*

\*Tufekci, Zeynep and Christopher Wilson. 2012 “Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest: Observations from Tahrir Square” *Journal of Communication*.