

Political Science 535
Government and Politics in Modern Democracies

Winter 2006
Hopkins Hall 0162
128 North Oval Mall
Tuesday and Thursday 1.30 pm – 3.18 pm

Office Hours. Tuesday and Thursday, 3.30 pm – 4.30 pm and by appointment

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Course description

This course will introduce students to the comparative study of government and politics in modern democracies. We are going to investigate political institutions and the way in which they differ across countries in providing an arena within which political conflict takes place. We will analyze the effects of these institutions and other factors on the way in which politics functions in a given society. In the first place, however, studying democratic politics requires a definition of democracy and a conceptualization of how democracy is different from non-democratic regimes.

Our attempt to outline the essence and nature of democracy therefore will be the topic for the first section of this course. This section encompasses a debate about an appropriate definition of democracy, and a brief comparison of the characteristics pertaining to democratic and non-democratic (e.g. authoritarian or totalitarian) regimes. Moreover, in a related effort and equipped with this knowledge, we will investigate the historical process that has brought democratic institutions into existence in the first place and the factors that can help to explain, why some countries are successful in forming democratic institutions, while others are not.

After having established this distinction between undemocratic and democratic government, the second part of this course will look more closely at the differences and similarities within the group of democratic countries. We are going to discuss the ways in which the institutions of modern democracies are structured, how they function and how this affects the conduct of politics. In this context, there are three important dimensions of institutional differences that will be taken into account: first, government types (parliamentary, presidential and semi-presidential); second, electoral systems (plurality, majority and proportional representation); and third, overall styles of democratic governance (consensual and majoritarian).

Eventually, the third section of this course will deal with the nature of political conflict itself. It will focus on the effects of those previously outlined institutional differences and other factors, such as social cleavages, on the conduct of politics. We will begin by discussing the characteristics and the importance of social cleavages. Subsequently, we are going to investigate the role of political parties and party systems, followed by an analysis of voting behavior as an expression of political conflict on the individual level. This course will close with a survey of a political phenomenon, which stands for a new set of governmental structures and which, in establishing these structures has created an entirely new arena of political conflict: the European Union.

In order to illustrate these topics, we will primarily refer to examples of established democracies in Western Europe and North America, but in addition to that, some examples from emerging or recently consolidated democracies in Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America will be used as well. The entire course is based on student readings and lectures with in-class discussion. Regular attendance and reading the assigned materials before class is crucial. You should come to class prepared and ready to ask questions or comment on the themes covered in a particular session. You are encouraged to contact me, whenever you have a question or concern about the course, the readings, assignments etc. If this is the case, you are always welcome to see me during office hours, contact me through Email or arrange an appointment.

Readings

All the readings used in this course will be made available through the Electronic Reserve at the OSU libraries website. You can access, download or print the included articles both on campus and from any off-campus computer that has Internet access.

(1) Go to the OSU Libraries website (www.lib.ohio-state.edu). If you are on campus, no sign in is required; if you are accessing from off campus, you must first sign in through the link at the top of the page. (2) Click on OSU library catalog to go to OSCAR (3) On the OSCAR screen, select "Find reserves by: Course or Prof/ TA. Click on Prof/ TA and enter the instructor's name. Click on course and enter the name of the course. (4) Find the electronic reserve listing for the course and click on the listing. (5) You can print an article by right-clicking on it and selecting "Print target"; you can load the article on your computer by left-clicking on it.

Assignments and Grading

Two quizzes (30 % of final grade) and Final Exam (40 % of final grade)

Throughout the quarter, there will be two quizzes and one final exam. Each one of these three tests will take place following on the closure of the preceding substantive section of the course. Quiz # 1 is scheduled for January 19, quiz # 2 for February 9 and the final exam for March 14. The two quizzes are not cumulative; they will contain short essay questions about the major issues, concepts and examples covered in the preceding section of the course. The final exam, accordingly, will focus on the third section of the course, but other than the quizzes it will require you to integrate some of the information from the previous two sections. A study guide for the final exam with more specific information will be distributed in class on March 7. Each quiz will count for 15 %, and the final exam will count for 40 % toward your final grade.

Term Paper (30 % of final grade)

You are expected to complete a short term paper, with a recommended length of about 10 to 15 pages (12 point font, double spacing). In one of the class sessions during the first half of the quarter, I will provide you with an overview of how you should go about writing the paper, how it should be structured etc. Moreover, throughout the process of preparing and writing, you are encouraged to contact me for feedback, advice, or comments on draft versions of the paper etc.

The paper should contain a comparative analysis of some clearly specified feature of democratic government and politics. This could be government stability, representativeness of the political process, the quality of democracy or any other important characteristic of politics and government in modern democracies. You are supposed to compare and contrast two or more cases, in order to explain, how and why these cases are either different from one another or similar in terms of the characteristic that you chose to investigate.

Note that carrying out a comparison can entail two different things: first, you might want to conduct a comparison of one or two different cases (i.e. countries) for some given point or period of time; second, you could also carry out a comparison of only one country at different points in time or time periods (We will clarify this issue in class). The paper is not supposed to be based on original research; you can rely on secondary literature, but based on these sources you should try to outline an argument of your own.

The paper is due in class on March 9. Moreover, no later than February 14, you are required to hand in a brief proposal regarding the projected content and structure of your paper. This proposal should include the following: (1) Write a statement about which aspect of democratic government and politics you plan to investigate or explain in your paper (the “dependent variable”). (2) Mention the cases that you wish to use and outline briefly, why these cases constitute a good choice for dealing with your selected “dependent variable”. (3) Name the factors that you think can account for the similarities or differences between your cases in terms of the “dependent variable” that you chose to deal with. (4) Based on these three aspects, try to phrase an actual question that you plan to respond to through your paper. (5) Provide a brief outline of the structure that you have in mind to organize your arguments and explanations. (6) Provide a preliminary list of readings that you plan to use for writing the paper.

Formulating this proposal will help you to think about your paper at an early stage in the course and it will enable me to help you and give you some feedback. This applies to your research questions, the structure of your paper and also the literature that is relevant for your topic. After I have returned the proposal to you, along with my suggestions and comments, you are encouraged to meet with me for further advise on completing your paper.

Following current events

Regularly following news coverage of current events from quality sources, both in terms of American and foreign politics gives you the opportunity to apply the themes covered in this course. Some quality sources that I would suggest to consider are the *Economist* (www.economist.com), the *New York Times* (www.nytimes.com) and the English edition of *Der Spiegel* (<http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/>).

Grading Scale

A (100-90)	A- (89-85)	B+ (84-80)	B (79-75)	B- (74-70)	
C+ (69-65)	C (64-60)	C- (59-55)	D+ (54-50)	D (49-40)	E (<40)

Additional Course Policies

Accommodations for Students with disabilities

Every effort will be made to accommodate students with disabilities and/ or special needs. If this concerns you, please bring it to the attention of the instructor during the first week of the course. Moreover, students with documented disabilities should contact and register with the Office of Disability services.

Academic Dishonesty

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own; cheating and plagiarizing will not be tolerated. Any case of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University policies. Details of the University academic honesty policy and procedures provided for in case of violations can be obtained from the OSU website.

Course Schedule and Required Readings

Part I – Democracy and the development of democratic institutions

1. Introduction to the course and to Comparative Politics (01-03)

2. Democratic and non-democratic regimes (01-05 and 01-10)

Linz, Juan (1992) "Types of political regimes and respect for human rights". In: Eide, Asbjørn and Bernt Hagtvet: "Human Rights in Perspective"; pp.177-221 (ch. 8)

Diamond, Larry (2002). "Consolidating Democracies". In: LeDuc et al. "Comparing democracies 2", pp. 210-227 (ch. 10) (Focus on sections about definitions of democracy)

3. The formation of democratic institutions (01-12)

Bendix, Reinhard (1978). "Introduction". In: Bendix "Kings or People. Power and the mandate to rule", pp. 3-18.

4. Democratization and the failure of democracy (01-17)

Diamond, Larry (2002). "Consolidating Democracies". In: LeDuc et al. "Comparing democracies 2", pp. 210-227 (ch. 10) (Focus on sections that discuss the process of democratic consolidation)

Gerhard Loewenberg (1971), "The Remaking of the German Party System," pp. 259-280 in Mattei Dogan and Richard Rose (eds.) "European Politics"

****01-19: Quiz 1 on first part of the course****

Part II – A comparative perspective on democratic institutions

5. Government types: Parliamentary, Presidential and Semi-Presidential (01-19 and 01-24)

Lijphart, Arend (1984). "Parliamentary vs. presidential government". In "Democracies", pp. 68-77 (ch. 5)

Juan Linz (1994), "Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy: Does It Make a Difference?", in Linz and Valenzuela (eds.) "The Failure of Presidential Democracy"

Giovanni Sartori, "Neither Presidentialism nor Parliamentarism," in

Linz and Valenzuela (eds.) "The Failure of Presidential Democracy"

Alfred Stepan and Cindy Skach, "Presidentialism and Parliamentarism in Comparative Perspective," in Linz and Valenzuela (eds.) "The Failure of Presidential Democracy"

6. Electoral Systems: Plurality, Majority, Proportional Representation (01-26 and 01-31)

Blais, André and Louis Mascotte (2002). "Electoral Systems". In: LeDuc et al. "Comparing democracies 2", pp. 40-69 (ch. 2)

Lijphart, Arend (1984). "Electoral Systems: Majority and Plurality Methods vs. Proportional Representation". In "Democracies", pp. 150-168 (ch. 9)

7. Overall style of democratic governance: majoritarian or consensual (02-02 and 02-07)

Lijphart, Arend (1984) "The Westminster Model of Democracy" and "The Consensus Model of Democracy". In: "Democracies", pp. 1-36 (chs. 1 and 2)

****02-09: Quiz 2 on second part of the course****

Part III – Institutions and political conflict in modern democracies

8. Social cleavages (02-09 and 02-14)

- Alan Zuckerman (1975). "Political Cleavage: A conceptual and theoretical analysis";
in: British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 231-248.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin (1981). "Elections: The expression of the democratic class struggle";
in Lipset, "Political Man. The social bases of politics"; pp. 230-278 (ch. 7)
- Inglehart, Ronald "The Nature of Value Change," and "From Class-Based to Value-Based
Politics," in Mair, Peter (ed.) The West European Party System, pp. 247-252, pp. 266-282.

****02-14: Proposal for term paper due in class****

9. The role of political parties and party systems (02-16 and 02-21)

- Kitschelt, Herbert (1988) "Left-Libertarian Parties: Explaining Innovation in Competitive Party
Systems". In: World Politics, Vol. 40, No.2, pp. 194-234
- Gunther, Richard and Larry Diamond (2003). "Species of Political Parties". In: Party Politics,
Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 167-199
- Mair, Peter (2002) "Comparing Party Systems". In: LeDuc et al. "Comparing democracies 2",
pp. 88-107 (ch. 4)

10. Determinants of voting behavior (02-23 and 02-28)

- Lijphart, Arend (1997). "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma". In:
American Political Science Review, Vol. 91, No. 1, pp. 1-14
- Norris, Pippa (1998). "Introduction" to "Elections and Voting Behavior", pp. xiii-xxv

11. Political conflict and the European Union (03-02 and 03-07)

- Eder, Klaus and Bernhard Giesen (2001). "Citizenship and the making of a European
Society". In: Eder and Giesen "European Citizenship", pp. 245-270 (ch. 11)
- Thatcher, Margaret (1979). "A Family of Nations". In: Nelsen and Stubb (1998) "The
European Union", pp. 49-54 (ch. 8)

****03-07: Study guide for final exam will be distributed****

12. Review Session for final exam (03-09)

****03-09: Term Paper due in class****

13. Final Exam (03-14)