

Political Science 420: Comparing Political Parties

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Course Description:

Citizens often express a high level of disdain for political parties—regarding them more as influence peddlers and tools of interest group manipulation than as advocates for the public good. However, scholars consistently argue that political parties are absolutely essential to the proper function of a modern, representative democracy. This course focuses on three key questions relating to the study of political parties: 1) why do political parties exist? 2) why do party systems vary across nations? 3) how do these variations affect policy-making and policy outcomes? We will examine these questions in advanced, industrial democracies like those found in the United States and Western Europe, as well as in developing democracies found in Central/Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

It is absolutely essential that students understand that political science is not simply description (Why would you care how many parties there are in Poland?). It requires a systematic form of critical thinking that emulates the scientific method. Based upon our empirical observations of the political world we develop theories of how the world works. Theories generate hypotheses that we subject to rigorous empirical analysis. The goal of this course is to apply the scientific method to the study of political parties across various political systems. (So, theories→ hypotheses→ data collection→ data analysis→ evaluation of the hypotheses/theory based upon the evidence→ new theories and hypotheses.) While the political world involves many complex interactions, we will attempt to simplify this intricate process in order to make causal inferences regarding the political world (Occam's Razor: the simplest answer is usually right).

Assignments and Evaluations:

Grades are awarded upon the following assignments:

1. A 10 to 15 page empirical research paper. 2. 10 quizzes. 3. Classroom participation. The following indicated the weight given each assignment:

Research Paper: 60 Percent
Quizzes: 30 Percent
Participation: 10 Percent

Research Paper: Students are required to write a 10 to 15 page research paper concerning an empirical question related to political parties. Examples of empirical questions include: why do parties win election/reelection?; does campaign finance affect party structure or behavior?; do electoral laws affect party systems?; do party systems affect policy outcomes?; do parties fulfill their campaign promises?; why do legislators switch parties?; how do legislators “get ahead” in the party?; why do people join/identify with parties? (This list is hardly exhaustive). Late papers will be marked down one full letter grade for each day they are late (A to B, B to C, etc.). Students must rely on a minimum of **15 sources** of information in the analysis, with no more than two websites counting toward this total.¹ At least **ten sources** should be from refereed journal articles (e.g. *APSR*, *AJPS*, *World Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, etc.) or university press books (e.g. Cambridge, Oxford, Harvard, Michigan, California, etc.). No more than **three sources** can come from the course syllabus. Papers will be evaluated on the basis of both style and substance. You may co-author with one classmate (choose wisely) and if you receive permission from another professor you may “double-dip”. Paper topics, including a one-paragraph abstract, are due no later than September 25th. This abstract should include at least four references that provide the theoretical motivation for the abstract/research project. This will count toward five percent of your total grade. A two

¹ Books, articles, and data available on the web that also appears in printed format count as regular (non-web) citations.

page summary of the paper outlining the relevant literature/theory, the testable hypotheses, the data to be used, and any preliminary results is due no later than October 23rd. This should include at least 10 references related to the summary/research project. This will count toward 15 percent of your total grade. Two anonymous copies of a draft of the manuscript are due November 16th at the start of class. These anonymous copies will be randomly distributed to two classmates. Each classmate will return the paper with one page of anonymous constructive criticism at the start of class November 18th. You must also provide me with a copy of your comments (and please include your name on this copy) and each set of comments will count for a quiz grade. Grades on your paper comments cannot be dropped from your quiz grade (see below). The final draft of the paper is due Wednesday, December 16th. This will count toward 40 percent of your total grade.

Quizzes: Quizzes will be given approximately once a week. At least 13 quizzes will be given (including your paper comments) and your top 10 quiz grades will count toward 30 percent of your total grade, though your two grades from your reviews cannot be dropped. Quizzes may include multiple choice and short answer/identification questions. They will be drawn primarily from the readings and student suggested questions are always welcome. They will be given during the start of class and must be completed in first 10 minutes of class (this is what we call an institutional incentive to come to class and be on time).

Participation: Students should come to class prepared to discuss the readings. **Students who fail to complete the readings and/or fail to bring a copy of the readings with them to class will be asked to leave.** Each student is allowed five absences and participation grades will simply be the number of classes attended divided by the total number of classes minus 5. Finally, students who regularly contribute to classroom discussions are *far* more likely to have their grades rounded up than students that remain silent.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and cheating will be punished according to the university's policy on academic integrity.

Readings:

The following texts have been ordered for the University Bookstore:

Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties? The Origins and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Webb, Paul, David M. Farrell, and Ian Holliday, editors. 2003. *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. (Referred to as WFH in the list of readings)

Additional readings can be found electronically through the UB library or on UB Learns (see below). If you are unfamiliar with the library system you can search for journals online by the journal's title, then you simply follow the links to the appropriate volume, issue, and article. For example, an article from the *American Journal of Political Science* can be found by going to the library page, clicking on electronic journals, and typing *American Journal of Political Science*. I also encourage you to read a reputable newspaper or news magazine such as the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, Washington Post, LA Times, or the Economist.

Topics:

Introduction

Week 1 (8/31-9/2)--Introduction and What is political science? Part I—No class Friday

Zielinski, J., K. Slomczynski, and G. Shabad. 2005. "Electoral Control in New Democracies: The Perverse Incentives of Fluid Party Systems." *World Politics* 57(3):365-395. (UB Library)

Quaile Hill, Kim. 2002. "The Lamentable State of Science Education in Political Science." (UB Learns)

Week 2 (9/7-9/11)--What is political science? Part II

King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1995. "The Importance of Research Design in Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 89(2): 475-481 (UB Library)

Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65(3): 682-693. (UB Library)
Geddes, Barbara. 1991. "How the cases you choose affect the answers you get." *Political Analysis* (UB Learns)

Week 3 (9/14-9/18)--A Brief Statistical Interlude

Levitt and Dubnew. 2005. "Introduction: The Hidden Side of Everything." (UB Learns)
Studenmund. 1997. "Chapter 1: An Overview of Regression Analysis." (UB Learns)
Regression Tables and Simple Data Analysis . (UB Learns)

Week 4 (9/21-9/25)--Why do parties exist?

Aldrich Chapter 1
Aldrich Chapter 2
WFH introduction (**Paper abstracts due on 9/25**)

Week 5 (9/30-10/2)--Why do parties exist (part 2)? (**UB closed on 9/28—No class on Monday**)

Gunther and Diamond. 2001. "Types and Functions of Parties." (UB Learns).
Strom and Muller. 1999. "Political Parties and Hard Choices." (UB Learns).
Aldrich chapters 3 and 4

Week 6 (10/5-10/9)--Why do parties exist (part 3)? and Party systems and organization.

Aldrich chapter 5
Downs. 1957. "Chapter 8: The Statics and Dynamics of Party Ideologies." (UB Learns)
Sartori. 2001. "The Party Effects of Electoral Systems." (UB Learns).

Week 7 (10/12-10/16)-- Party systems and organization (part 2)

Shugart, Matthew Soberg. 1995. "The Electoral Cycle and Institutional Sources of Divided Presidential Government." *American Political Science Review* 89(2): 327-343. (UB Library)
Rakner, Lise and Nicolas van de Walle. 2009. "Opposition Weakness in Africa." *Journal of Democracy* 20(3): 108-121. (UB Library)
Mozaffar, Shaheen, James R. Scarritt, and Glen Galaich. 2003. "Electoral Institutions, Ethnopolitical Cleavages, and Party Systems in Africa's Emerging Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 379-390. (UB Library)

Week 8 (10/19-10-23) Party systems and organization (part 3)

Sridharan and Varshney. 2001. "Toward Moderate Pluralism: Political Parties in India." (UB Learns)
WFL Chapters 2-4
WFL Chapters 5 and 8 (**Paper Summaries due on 10/23**)

Week 9 (10/26-10/30) Party systems and organization (part 4)

Seddon Wallack, Jessica Alejandro Gaviria, Ugo Panizza, and Ernesto Stein. 2003. "Political Particularism Around the World," *World Bank Economic Review* 17(1): 133-143. (UB Library)
Jones, Mark P. and Wonjae Hwang. 2005. "Party Government in Presidential Democracies: Extending Cartel Ehtoery Beyond the U.S. Congress." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(2): 267-282. (UB Library)
Ames, Barry. 2002. "Party Discipline in the Chamber of Deputies." In *Legislative Politics in Latin America*, Scott Morgenstern and Benito Nacif, ed. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. (UB Learns)

Week 10 (11/2-11/6) Party systems and organization (part 5)

Aldrich chapter 6
Aldrich chapter 8
Research Paper Discussion (Friday)

Week 11 (11/9-11/13) Parties and Policy Outputs

Hofferbert, Richard I. and Ian Budge. 1992. "The Party Mandate and the Westminster Model: Election Programmes and Government Spending in Britain." *British Journal of Political Science* 22(2): 151-182. (UB Library)

Tsebelis, George. 1999. "Veto Players and Law Production in Parliamentary Democracies: An Empirical Analysis." *American Political Science Review* 93(3): 591-608. (UB Library)

Bernhard, William and David Leblang. 2002. "Political Parties and Monetary Commitments." *International Organization* 56(4): 803-830.

Week 12 (11/16-11/20) Parties and Policy Outputs (part 2) (**Anonymous rough drafts due 11/16, anonymous comments due 11/18**)

Boix, Carles. 1997. "Political Parties and the Supply Side of the Economy: The Provision of Physical and Human Capital in Advance Economies." *American Political Science Review* 41(3): 814-845. (UB Library)
Aldrich chapter 7

Burstein, Paul. 2003. "The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy: A Review and an Agenda." *Political Research Quarterly* 56(1): 29-40. (UB Library)

Week 13 (11/23) Parties and Policy Outputs (part 3)

Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2006. "The Discreet Charm of Formal Institutions: Postcommunist Party Competition and State Oversight." *Comparative Political Studies* 39(3): 271-3000. (UB Library)

Week 14 (11/30-12/4) Parties and Policy Outputs (part 4)

Ames, Barry. 1995. "Electoral Rules, Constituency Pressures, and Pork Barrel: Bases of Voting in the Brazilian Congress." *Journal of Politics* 57(2): 324-343. (UB Library)

Johnson, Gregg B. TBA. (UB Learns)

Haggard and Noble. 2001. "Power Politics: Elections and Electricity Regulation in Taiwan." (UB Learns).

Week 15 (12/7-12/11) Parties and Policy Outputs (part 5) and Islamist Parties

Iverson and Soskice. 2006. "Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More than Others." *Journal of Politics* 100(2) 165-182. (UB Library)

Cofman Wittes, Tamara. 2008. "Islamist Parties: Three Kinds of Movements" *Journal of Democracy* 19(3): 7-12.

Safa, Oussama. 2006. "Lebanon Springs Forward." *Journal of Democracy* 17(1): 22-37.

12/16: **Research Paper Due** at 12 pm. Deliver to 421 Park Hall.

Finally, slight adjustments in the readings may occur if student interest warrants (we may add or subtract certain readings).