

PSCI 240-001: Comparative Politics II: Comparative Democratic Institutions

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Winter 2021

Monday and Wednesday, 12:00-1:50 PM
Remote (synchronous)

Office hours: <https://jacksantucci.as.me>

1 Overview & goals

This course looks at the design of political institutions and how that shapes party systems. It also looks at how party systems shape the design of political institutions. Finally, given that these things shape each other, we will ask whether institutions matter (and, if they do, how so).

Specific topics include: democracy, party competition, configuration of executive and legislative powers, electoral systems (including gerrymandering), the design of a legislature, and what it means to be represented.

Please keep the United States in mind as we move through these topics. We are in the midst of a nationwide ‘reform moment.’ This debate touches many course themes: fairness to under-represented voices, whether democracy is in danger, how to make government more efficient/less gridlocked, and so on. All of our readings have U.S. relevance, some more explicit than others.

I will assess your learning (and effort) mostly through your writing. The essay assignments ask you to show mastery of course concepts, then integrate and apply them to current events.

In short, the course has three goals:

1. Familiarize concepts and distinctions in the field of democratic institutions.
2. Give you practice writing clearly, because writing and thinking are inseparable.
3. Prepare you to analyze and maybe even redesign institutions in your own community.

2 Required work product

Your grade will be based on the following components:

1. Class participation (15%) – Based on attendance and quality (not quantity) of additions to discussion. Try to do two things as you prepare for class: (1) find and understand the key distinction(s) in the readings, and (2) have some sense of how they relate to key distinctions from earlier classes.
2. Presentation (15%) – On the first day of class, we will assign one (or more) person (people) to present each day's reading. Your job is to find its core claim, get a sense of the evidence, and figure out how these relate to overarching course themes (effects of institutions, causes of institutions, implications for representation). You do not need to prepare slides, but you may if they are helpful. Please see this for tips: https://jacksantucci.com/docs/syllabi/advice_for_readers.pdf.
3. Midterm and final papers (35% each) – Prompts are forthcoming. Expect having to write 1,000-1,500 words for each (4-6 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font). The prompts will ask you to integrate and reflect on course material up to that point. Here are my guidelines on writing strong essays: https://jacksantucci.com/docs/syllabi/how_to_write_an_a_paper.pdf. One will be due at 11:59 PM (Eastern) on **Friday, February 19**. The other will be due at 11:59 PM (Eastern) on **Tuesday, March 16**. Each must be uploaded to Turnitin, via Blackboard.

3 E-mail policy

1. Use a subject line that indicates your need. Please don't reply to a blanket email sent through Blackboard, nor to a thread about some other issue.
2. Include the full course number (i.e., PSCI-240-001).
3. Be as specific as possible, and use complete sentences.
4. Keep all correspondence with respect to the same issue in the same thread. Start a different thread for a different issue.
5. Use your Drexel email so that I can search my inbox for your username.

4 No redistribution of course materials

The following language is provided by Drexel University:

It is important to recognize that some or all of the course materials provided to you may be the intellectual property of Drexel University, the course instructor, or others. Use of this intellectual property is governed by Drexel University

policies, including the IT-1 policy found here: <https://drexel.edu/it/about/policies/policies/01-Acceptable-Use>

Briefly, this policy states that course materials, including recordings, provided by the course instructor may not be copied, reproduced, distributed or re-posted. Doing so may be considered a breach of this policy and will be investigated and addressed as possible academic dishonesty, among other potential violations. Improper use of such materials may also constitute a violation of the University's Code of Conduct found here: <https://drexel.edu/cpo/policies/cpo-1> and will be investigated as such.

5 Other policies

You agree to:

1. Treat guest speakers and classmates with respect.
2. Check Drexel email daily through the date of the final exam.
3. Attend class and meet course deadlines. Out-of-class written work loses five points for each 24-hour period past the time and date it is due.
4. Use Internet search or a dictionary to look up words you do not know.
5. Abide by all other Drexel policies, found at the following websites. Note that I reserve the right to use plagiarism-detection software.
 - Academic integrity: <https://drexel.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity>
 - Disability accommodation: <https://drexel.edu/oed/disabilityResources/students>
 - Add/Drop: <http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/course-add-drop>
 - Course withdrawal: <https://drexel.edu/provost/policies/course-withdrawal>
 - Incomplete grades: https://drexel.edu/provost/policies/incomplete_grades
 - Grade appeals: <https://drexel.edu/provost/policies/grade-appeals>

I agree to:

1. Abide by any grading guidelines in this syllabus and related instructions for assignments. Grading is on the 0-100 scale: 97 and up (A+), 93-96 (A), 90-92 (A-), 87-89 (B+), 83-87 (B), 80-82 (B-), and so on, down to 50 (F). Rounding occurs for final grades only, to the nearest whole number. The rounding threshold is 0.5 percentage points.
2. Answer student e-mail within 48 business hours. Business hours are 9 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday, non-holiday.

3. Except for any required books, post links to readings on Blackboard, if not the readings themselves.
4. Grade written work within 10 business days of submission.
5. Notify you of changes to this syllabus at least one week in advance of affected due dates.
6. Give office hours on a by-appointment basis. (See link above.) Students who are not in Philadelphia can book these times for phone conversations.

6 Schedule of readings and classes

6.1 Basics

Monday, January 11: This syllabus, my reading tips, and the guidelines for papers. See links in Section 2 above. Please take the writing guidelines seriously.

Wednesday, January 13: Dahl, Robert A. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, pp. 1-16. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Monday, January 18: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. No class.

Wednesday, January 20: Schwartz, Thomas. 1989. "Why Parties?" Typescript. UCLA.

6.2 Executive-legislative relations

Monday, January 25: Samuels, David J. and Matthew S. Shugart. 2010. *Presidents, Parties, and Prime Ministers: How the Separation of Powers Affects Party Organization and Behavior*, pp. 1-21. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wednesday, January 27: Colomer, Josep M. 2013. "Elected Kings with the Name of Presidents: On the Origins of Presidentialism in the United States and Latin America." *Revista Iationamericana de Politica Comparada* 7: 79-97.

6.3 Electoral systems

Monday, February 1: Norris, Pippa. 1997. "Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian, and Mixed Systems." *International Political Science Review* 18 (3): 297-312.

Wednesday, February 3: Ahmed, Amel. 2010. "Reading History Forward: The Origins of Electoral Systems in European Democracies." *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (8/9): 1059-88.

Monday, February 8: Reilly, Ben and Michael Maley. 2000. “The Single Transferable Vote and the Alternative Vote Compared,” pp. 37-58. In *Elections in Australia, Ireland, and Malta under the Single Transferable Vote: Reflections on an Embedded Institution*, edited by Shaun Bowler and Bernard Grofman. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Wednesday, February 10: Guest speaker.

6.4 Assembly size

Monday, February 15: Shugart, Matthew and Rein Taagepera. 2020. “Predicting Party Systems from Electoral Systems.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia, Politics* (online).

Wednesday, February 17: Jacobs, Kristof and Simon Otjes. 2015. “Explaining the Size of Assemblies: A Longitudinal Analysis of the Design and Reform of Assembly Sizes in Democracies around the World.” *Electoral Studies* 40: 280-92.

6.5 Representation (and the U.S.)

Monday, February 22: Abott, Carolyn and Aysa Magazinnik. 2020. “At-Large Elections and Minority Representation in Local Government.” *American Journal of Political Science* 64 (3): 717-733.

Wednesday, February 24: Guinier, Lani. 1992. “The Representation of Minority Interests: The Question of Single-Member Districts.” *Cardozo Law Review* 14 (5): 1135-74.

Monday, March 1: Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. “Rethinking Representation.” *American Political Science Review* 97 (4): 515-28.

Wednesday, March 3: McGann, Anthony J., Charles Anthony Smith, Michael Latner, and Alex Keena. *Gerrymandering in America: The House of Representatives, the Supreme Court, and the Future of Popular Sovereignty*, pp. 1-21. New York: Cambridge University Press.

6.6 Does reform matter?

Monday, March 8: Bowler, Shaun and Todd Donovan. 2013. *The Limits of Electoral Reform*, pp. 1-18. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wednesday, March 10: Taagepera, Rein. 1999. “Designing Electoral Rules and Waiting for an Electoral System to Evolve.” Typescript. Conference on Constitutional Design 2000, University of Notre Dame.