

ELECTIONS IN THE MODERN WORLD

POL SCI 377
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Spring 2022
TR 12:30-12:45
Room: Bolton 281

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Office: Bolton 670
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Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3pm or by
appointment
Mode of Delivery: In Person

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 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 attendance grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. Absences will only be excused for illness, family crises, religious observances etc. Late Policy: Please arrive to class on time unless you have a valid excuse.

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.

Each week I will post on CANVAS 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 "check" or "check-minus" and "unsatisfactory" will be assigned.

3) Complete response papers

You will be responsible for writing three 2-3 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--- April 3

For this debate, the class will be divided into two 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 via email by April 1. 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 Analytic Paper

One of your most important assignments in this class will be a 10 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 2500 words and may draw upon a combination of primary and secondary sources.

In February, 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 March 10, you will submit a topic to me in writing.

On April 21, I will ask each of you to submit a written progress report on your research. This progress report should be no less than 5 pages long and should contain a list of sources. If you would like to turn in an early draft of the paper at this time, I will provide comments.

The final version of your paper will be due via email to me on May 20.

6) One Midterm quiz

In-class on March 17. This exam will cover material in the first part of the course.

7) One Final Exam.

Tuesday May 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:

Reading Quizzes and Class Participation: 25%

Response Papers and Discussion Leadership: 15%

Debate Position Paper and Participation: 5%

Mid-term exam: 15%

Final exam 20%

Final Paper Progress Report: 5%

Final Paper Final Draft: 15%

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

Texts for Purchase:

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

Chapters of this will be on Canvas, but we will use this extensively during the first weeks. All other readings listed on the syllabus be made available on Canvas 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 60% of the remaining time will be spent preparing for class by doing assigned readings and reviewing previous lecture notes. The remaining 40% will be spent preparing written assignments and studying for exams.

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

Other 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 CANVAS VERSION OF THE SYLLABUS BEFORE DOING YOUR READINGS.]

PART I: THE PROMISE OF ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY

January 25-Introduction and Overview

January 27-The Pre-History of Elections—Lot vs election. Ancient Greece. Florence. The Enlightenment.

*Manin, Bernard. 1997 *Principles of Representative Government*, pgs 1-4, 8-41 and 74-92

February 1-Modern Elections—The principle of distinction. The foundations of representation. Why is representation a good thing? Why representation? Are elections inherently aristocratic?

*Manin, Bernard. 1997. *Principles of Representative Government*, pg 94-98 and 102-131

February 3-Democracy and Elections –Modern electoral democracy. What is a democracy? What makes elections democratic?

*Manin, Bernard. 1997. *Principles of Representative Government*, pg 161-183

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

February 8 Electoral Systems—An overview of the world’s major electoral systems. Proportional representation. First past the post systems. Electoral thresholds. District Magnitude. Strategic Voting and Disproportionality. The mechanical and psychological effects of electoral systems.

Comparing Democracies 4, Chapter 2, pp 11-19

Principles of Comparative Politics, Chapter 13, pp 572-597

February 10—Electoral Systems, Representation, and Governance—How do electoral systems affect who gets elected? How do they affect representation and accountability?

Comparing Democracies 4, Chapter 2, pp 19-27

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

February 15 Models of Electoral Linkage—Two visions of electoral linkages. Pros and cons of representation and accountability as linkage mechanisms.

*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

February 17 Electoral Rules and Representation—Congruence between citizens and policymakers. Clarity of responsibility. Models of democracy. The spatial model.

Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy*. 9-20 and 30-40

*John Huber and Bingham G. Powell Jr. 1994. "Congruence between Citizens and Policymakers in Two Visions of Liberal Democracy" *World Politics* 46.3

February 24 Dilemmas of Representation --- Obstacles to the mandate conception of democracy.

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

*Achen, Christopher and Larry Bartels. 2016. *Democracy for Realists*. Chapter 2.

March 1 Dilemmas of Accountability-- Retrospective Voting and Its Critics.

*Achen, Christopher and Larry Bartels. 2016. *Democracy for Realists*. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

March 3—Descriptive Representation—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*

March 8 Electoral Participation—Why is voter participation important in a democracy? What are the determinants of voter turnout?

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

Comparing Democracies 4, Chapter 4

March 10- No Class

March 15 Money and Elections-- Income inequality as a threat to equal representation?

*Bartels, Larry. 2018. *Unequal Democracy*. Selection

*Bonica, Adam, Nolan McCarty, Keith Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. 2013. "Why Hasn't Democracy Slowed Rising Inequality?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*.*

March 17—In-Class Mid Term Quiz

March 29—Polarization, Accountability, and Democracy—What is polarization? Affective vs Ideological polarization. The causes of polarization. Polarization and the rise of illiberalism. Can polarization undermine democracy?

Svolik, Milan. 2020. "Polarization versus Democracy." *Journal of Democracy*.

Klein, Ezra. 202. *Why We're Polarized*. Chapter 3

PART III: FLAWED ELECTIONS

March 31 Electoral Integrity Electoral fraud. Why is it employed in some settings, but not others? Detecting electoral fraud.

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

April 5—In-Class Debate

April 7—No Class

April 12 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

April 14 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. 2014. “Political Machines at Work: Voter Mobilization and Electoral Subversion in the Workplace” *World Politics*.

April 19 Elections and Violence—Pre- and Post-election violence. Causes. Consequences. Prevention.

*Birch, Sarah. 2020. *Electoral Violence, Corruption, and Political Order*. Selections

April 21 Elections, Political Parties, and Accountability—How do stable political parties facilitate representation and accountability? Individual vs collective accountability.

*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).

April 26—Policy Responsiveness under Flawed Elections—Policy responsiveness in poor countries. Appointed vs elected leaders. Authoritarian elections and human development. Local elections.

*Khemani, Stuti. 2015. “Buying Votes Versus Supplying Public Services: Political Incentives to Under-Invest in Pro-Poor Politics” *Journal of Development Economics*.

PART IV: AUTHORITARIAN ELECTIONS

April 28: Elections under Autocracy What makes an election free and fair? An introduction to autocratic elections.

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

May 3: Why do autocrats hold elections? --The logic of authoritarian elections. Cooptation. Elite management

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

*Blaydes, Lisa. 2011. *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. Chapter 3

May 5: The Consequences of Authoritarian Elections

*Reuter, Ora John and Graeme Robertson. 2012. "Subnational Appointments in Authoritarian Regimes: Evidence from Russian Gubernatorial Appointments" *Journal of Politics*.

May 10: The Breakdown of Electoral Authoritarianism: Elites Defections. Conspiracies. Cooptation and Its Limitations.

*Reuter, Ora John and David Szakonyi. 2019. "Elite Defection under Autocracy: Evidence from Russia" *American Political Science Review*.

May 12— The Breakdown of Electoral Authoritarianism: Opposition Dilemmas of opposition under electoral autocracy. How do opposition parties mobilize? How do they coordinate? Voting behavior of opposition supporters. Systemic and non-systemic oppositions.

*Bunce, Valerie and Sharon Wolchik. 2010. "Defeating Dictators: Electoral Change and Stability in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes" *World Politics*