POLI 124A
Political
Consequences of
Electoral Systems

Instructor:
Fortunato

Spring 2024
Tuesday, Thursday
Warren Lecture Hall 2111
3:30-4:50p

CONTACT FOR INSTRUCTOR
David Fortunato
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CONTACT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT
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Walk-in

COURSE SCHEDULE
- April 30th midterm review
- May 2nd midterm (in class)
- June 10th final exam. 3p-5:59p

COURSE DESCRIPTION
We will study electoral systems, which structure the rules of competition for parties, how they compete, how they cooperate, how they are selected into office, and their internal organization. This will be an applied course, where discussion and application of concepts will be favored over memorization of facts. After this quarter, we will understand why some countries have many parties, while others have very few, and we will begin to get a sense of why different countries make the types of policy decisions we observe.
COURSE DELIVERABLES

1. **Memos.** Students will compose and deliver two response memos (approximately 1000 words). Memos will be randomly distributed to students and will cover the content of readings for the day the memo is due.
   a. The first memo will be on the textbook material. Students will write about something they learned in the chapter(s) and how it helps them understand something about the politics of a particular country that they are familiar with. (We understand this will be the US for most students, but it need not be)
   b. The second memo will be on the applied readings composing the second half of the course. Students will write a memo that ties the two readings together and synthesizes them into a testable expectation. That is, the student will use what they have learned to generate an empirical prediction about the real world and suggest a test for it—e.g., “if we compare per capita government spending under electoral system x and electoral system y, spending should be higher under system x for the following reasons...”

2. **Quizzes.** We will administer brief, simple quizzes from time to time to incentivize attendance in lecture and determine the participation grade. More below.

3. **Midterm.** Students will take one brief midterm exam. The midterm exam will be focused on the content of the textbook and will be administered during normal class meeting time on **May 2.** Exam will be hand-written and open notes. No electronic devices are allowed.

4. **Final.** Students will take one comprehensive final exam in the time and location determined by central scheduling. Exam will be hand-written and open notes. No electronic devices are allowed.

**Class participation:** We will administer brief, simple quizzes from time to time. They will only take a minute or two to complete and will be very easy for anyone that has done the reading and attended lecture. These quizzes will determine 15% of the course grade. On days we have a country-expert visiting with us, the “quiz” will be a written submission of a question for the expert. Thoughtful questions that demonstrate you have read a bit about the election will be graded more highly. Please have a hard copy of your question, with your name on the paper, in hand when you enter class to deliver to the instructor.

The course is too large for seminar-style instruction so we cannot evaluate students on oral in-class participation. But, in-class participation is highly encouraged and appreciated. Student interaction with the concepts and instructor will keep the course livelier and help students and the instructor identify potential problem-areas that require more time or a different type of in-class discussion.

*If you have a question on the content being taught, I can just about guarantee that several of your classmates do as well and they will be grateful to you for raising the question. PLEASE ASK QUESTIONS IF YOU HAVE THEM.*
REQUIRED BOOKS AND MATERIALS
Brian F. Crisp, Patrick Cunha Silva, Santiago Olivella, and Guillermo Rosas. Electoral System Incentives for Interparty and Intraparty Politics. 2024. The instructor will provide this text via CANVAS.

All other readings are articles and available through the university.

COURSE RULES
Maintaining Academic Integrity. I take academic honesty seriously and will not tolerate plagiarism or other forms of cheating or dishonesty. Students in this class have the right to expect that their fellow students are upholding the academic integrity of this University. You may ask other students to read and comment on your work, but all analytic work is expected to be your own. You will appropriately recognize and cite all sources of data or information you use. If you are unsure how to do this, please come to office hours or ask in class or ask the writing tutor. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please see UCSD’s academic honesty policy here: http://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/.

All cases of plagiarism and cheating will be referred to the office of academic integrity.

Submitting written work: Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be submitted for textual similarity and plagiarism review via Turnitin.com. All submitted memos will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. All written work must be submitted as a Word (.doc or .docx) file. Do not submit PDF, GoogleDocs documents, etc.

Late assignments: No late assignments will be accepted without a University-approved and documented excuse. Acceptable excuses include documented illness, or a death or serious illness in the immediate family. In exceptional cases, university-sanctioned employment-related travel can be a valid reason for being late with an assignment or missing an exam but only with prior approval from the professor at least two weeks in advance.

Grade disputes: If you believe that we made an error or oversight in grading your work you may petition the instructor to have your grade changed. To do so you must submit a written memo of no more than 400 words explaining how we made an error and stating the grade you believe that you deserve. We will not entertain grade complaints beyond seven calendar days after the assignment has been returned to you.

Students with Disabilities: Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students must present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) so that
accommodations may be arranged. Requests for accommodation must be made at least two weeks in advance of the midterm exam. Political Science liaison to OSD is Zain Sharifi (zasharifi@ucsd.edu). Contact the OSD for further information: 858.534.4382; osd@ucsd.edu; http://disabilities.ucsd.edu

**GRADING**

Final grades will be determined by the following formula:

1. Participation (quizzes)   15%
2. Memo 1                  10%
3. Memo 2                  10%
4. Midterm                 30%
5. Final                   35%

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Class 1:** Introduction to the class (2 April)

**Class 2:** Party politics (4 April)


CCOR Chapter 1.

**Class 3:** Electoral systems (9 April)

CCOR Chapters 2 and 3.

**Class 4:** Rules drive incentives (11 April)

CCOR Chapter 4.

**Korean legislative election (4/10)**

**Class 5:** Constructing the I-I space (16 April)

CCOR Chapter 5 and 6.

**Discuss Korean legislative election with Professor Munseob Lee**
**Class 6:** Structure of the competition space (18 April)

CCOR Chapter 7 and 8.

**Croatian parliamentary election (4/17)**

**Class 7:** Congruence (23 April)

CCOR Chapter 9.

Powell summary chapter.

**Indian general election begins (4/19)**

Discuss Croatian parliamentary election with Professor Andrea Aldrich

**Class 8:** Brand-building incentives (25 April)

CCOR Chapter 10 and 11.

**Class 9:** Review for midterm. (30 April)

Discussion of second memos

**Class 10:** Midterm exam (2 May)

**Class 11:** Legislative organization and behavior (7 May)

CCOR Chapter 12, 13, and 14.

**Panamanian general election (5/5)**

Discuss Indian election with Professor Gareth Nellis.

Primer on reading academic articles.

**Class 12:** Choosing electoral systems (9 May)


**North Macedonian parliamentary election (5/8)**

**Class 13:** Effects of system change—how do legislators behave (14 May)


**Eurovision song contest final (5/11—really, the world’s greatest election)**

**Class 14:** Effects of system change—how do voters behave (16 May)


**Class 15:** Political business cycles (21 May)

Required:


Recommended:

Dominican Republic general election (5/19)

Class 16: Redistribution and responsiveness (23 May)


Class 17: “Optimal” electoral systems (28 May)


Class 18: Gender quotas (30 May)

Required:


Recommended:


South African general election (5/29)

Class 19: Gender quotas and policy outcomes (4 June)

Required:


Recommended:


**Mexican general election (6/2)**

**Class 20: US electoral reform (6 June)**

Read over this website: [https://fairvote.org/our-reforms/ranked-choice-voting-information/#where-is-ranked-choice-voting-used](https://fairvote.org/our-reforms/ranked-choice-voting-information/#where-is-ranked-choice-voting-used)


One more to come...

**Final exam: June 10th, 3p-5:59p.**

Exam will be hand-written with open notes (hard copy). Use of computer, tablet, mobile phone, etc. will not be permitted.