This course compares major institutional structures such as presidentialism vs. parliamentarism, unicameralism vs. bicameralism, two vs. multiparty systems, plurality vs. proportional electoral systems etc.

The method of analysis is rational choice: we will assume that political actors are rational, and that each one of them tries to do the best possible given existing institutional constraints, and the behavior of other actors. We will see that this assumption leads to the conclusion that institutions affect political outcomes in systematic ways. We will focus on what political outcomes will be produced by different institutions.

The reading load is expected to be around 100 pp./week (50 pp./session). In addition, each student will “adopt” two countries (one presidential and one parliamentary (selection of one’s own country is not permitted)), and will write two 7-10 page reports, (instead of midterm and final) comparing the two countries in terms of their institutional features and their consequences. Country selection has to be discussed with the instructor during the first 2 weeks (no more than 3 persons will be allowed to select the same country on a first come first served basis). The first report compares Presidentialism with Parliamentarism and is due on Wednesday October 22. The second compares electoral systems and parliaments and is due the last date of class. The subjects are on purpose vague, because available information differs by country.

The final grade will take into account:
- Participation in class (20%).
- Papers (40% each).

Textbooks:
COURSE OUTLINE

WEEKS 1 and 2 (September 3-10): INTRODUCTION. WHY STUDY INSTITUTIONS?
-Tsebelis: Nested Games ch. 2, 4

WEEK 3 (September 15-17): GENERAL OVERVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS.
-Tsebelis: Veto Players: Intro, Chapters 1, 2.

WEEK 4 (September 22-24): ... AND SOME EFFECTS
-Tsebelis: Veto Players Chapters 7, and 8

WEEK 5 (September 29-October 1): PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEMS: SEPARATION AND COLLABORATION OF POWERS
-Lijphart, Ch. 1,2,3,4
-Tsebelis: Veto Players ch. 3
- Robert Elgie: “From Linz to Tsebelis: three waves of presidential/parliamentary studies?” Democratization: Volume 12, Number 1 / February 2005 Pages: 106 - 122

WEEKS 6 and 7 (October 6-15): PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEMS: AGENDA SETTING
-Tsebelis Veto players: ch 4
-Tsebelis and Aleman: “Presidential Conditional Agenda Setting in Latin America” World Politics 57 (3): 396-420

FIRST PAPER DUE ON WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 22

WEEKS 8 and 9 (October 22-29): ELECTORAL SYSTEMS + PARTY SYSTEMS
-Lijphart, Ch. 5,8.

WEEK 10 (November 3-5): COALITIONS
-Laver and Schofield Multiparty Government ch 5 and 6
-Strom, ”Minority Governments in Parliamentary Democracies” Comparative Political Studies 1984, 17: 199-228.
-Lijphart: Ch. 6,7
-Tsebelis *Veto Players* Chapter 9

WEEK 11 (November 10-12): BUREAUCRATS
-Tsebelis *Veto Players*: Chapter 10

WEEK 12 (November 17-19): JUDGES

WEEK 13 and 14 (November 24- December 3): BICAMERALISM AND FEDERALISM
-Tsebelis and Money: *Bicameralism*
-Tsebelis *Veto Players*: chapter 6
-Lijphart: Ch. 10

WEEK 15 (December 8): REFERENDUMS AND RECAPITULATION
-Tsebelis *Veto Players*: chapter 5 and Conclusions

**SECOND PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 8**