POLISCI 497: Electoral Politics in the Developing World
Prof. Noah Nathan
Winter 2017 // MW 11:30am–1pm
East Quad / Residential College 1508

Contact Info
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Office Hours: 6733 Haven Hall, Thursdays 4–6pm (see Canvas to sign up; email me to meet at another time)

Course Description
This course examines how electoral competition operates in new democracies and competitive authoritarian regimes in the developing world. The course will cover contemporary political science research on a series of topics: How do politicians campaign and distribute state resources to win elections? Why do some voters support corrupt, underperforming politicians while others choose effective leaders? Why are some elections stolen and rigged while others are free and fair? Why do some elections spark violence while others are peaceful? How can poor democracies transition away from patronage politics? Readings will draw on empirical cases from many world regions, including Africa, Latin America, the post-Soviet countries, South Asia, and the historical United States.

Assignments and Grading

- **Two short papers** (35% of grade; of which, 15% for Paper 1; 20% for Paper 2) – There will be two 5-7 page double-spaced papers based only on the assigned course readings and lecture materials answering a prompt that I will circulate 10 days in advance of each due date. Paper 1 is due **Sunday, February 19 by 11:59pm**. Paper 2 is due **Friday, March 31 by 11:59pm**.

- **Final project – “Policy Briefing Memo”** (30% of grade; of which, 5% for proposal email; 5% for class presentation; 20% for final submission): Students will submit a 10-12 page (double-spaced) policy briefing report analyzing recent elections in a developing country of their choosing. Detailed instructions for the assignment will be circulated later in the semester. The final project will be graded in stages. First, students will submit an annotated bibliography by email by **Sunday, April 9 by 11:59pm** identifying the country that they will write about and the academic, policy, and news media sources they will use in their research. Second, each student will do an in-class presentations on their project either on **Wednesday, April 12** or **Monday, April 17**. Third, the written memo is due **Tuesday, April 25 by 11:59pm**.

- **Class participation** (20% of grade) – Each student is expected to attend each class and contribute actively to the discussion. Attendance will be one component of your participation grade. Excused absences require documentation (doctor’s note, email from coach, etc). Barring an unforeseen emergency, you should notify me of an absence in advance of the affected class.

- **Reading pop quizzes** (15% of final grade) – Our class discussions and activities will not work if students show up not having read. To incentivize reading, there will be 10 unannounced quizzes on the assigned readings throughout the semester, conducted at the beginning of the class session (11:40am). These quizzes will take less than 5 minutes and should be simple if you have done the readings. I will drop the 2 worst scores and average together the remaining 8 for the final grade. **There are no make-ups for quizzes.** If a quiz occurs when you are out of class for an excused absence, I will...
still drop your two worst scores and average together the remaining quizzes for your grade (i.e., your best 7 quizzes will now be used to compute your grade, not 8). If a quiz occurs when you are out of class for an unexcused absence, it will be scored as a 0.

**Readings**

All required readings will be posted on the Canvas webpage for the course. Please let me know if you have any problems accessing the course materials.

**Course Policies**

Please see the final page of the syllabus for the remaining course policies.
Course Schedule

Part I: Introduction

1. **First meeting** (January 4)
   
   No assigned readings.

2. **Democratization in the developing world** (January 9)
   
   Assigned reading:


Part II: Why do voters sometimes support underperforming politicians?

3. **Information constraints?** (January 11)
   
   Assigned reading:

   1. Ferraz and Finan, 2008, “Exposing Corrupt Politicians: The Effects of Brazil’s Publicly Released Audits on Electoral Outcomes,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. (Focus on pgs. 703–711; look at Figures III and IV; read conclusion, bottom of 743 through first paragraph 744.)

4. **Identity voting? Blind partisanship?** (January 18)
   
   Assigned reading:

   2. Conroy-Krutz, Moehler, and Aguilar, 2016, “Partisan Cues and Vote Choice in Multiparty Systems,” *Comparative Political Studies*. (Focus on pgs. 3–15; look at Figure 2; bottom 24–25 (note: page numbers in the journal, not the PDF))

5. **Vote buying?** (January 23)
   
   Assigned reading:


3. Dunlop, “Vote Buying: Still a Thing in Kentucky,” Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting, 19 August 2016. (Optional)


Assigned reading:


**Part III: Distributive politics and implications for voters**

7. Clientelism vs. programmatic politics (January 30)

Assigned reading:


8. Where and when does clientelism happen? (February 1)

Assigned reading:


9. Who do politicians target? Core vs. swing voters (February 6)

Assigned reading:


2. Diaz Cayeros, Estevez, and Magaloni, 2016, *The Political Logic of Poverty Relief: Electoral Strategies and Social Policy in Mexico*, Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3. (Read pgs. 68–70 (Section 3.1); skip Section 3.2; pgs. 71–top of 75 (Section 3.3).
10. How does the ability to monitor affect who is targeted? (February 8)

Note: Paper 1 prompts circulated in class

Assigned reading:


11. When core voters benefit: ethnic favoritism (February 13)

Assigned reading:


12. Is ethnic voting rational? (and was Horowitz (1985) wrong?) (February 15)

Assigned reading:


13. Who votes in clientelistic vs. programmatic polities? (February 20)

Note: Paper 1 due night before class by 11:59pm

No assigned readings today. Class will be a lecture. We will focus on:


14. Movie day! (February 22)

In class: “An African Election,” 2011, directed by Jarreth and Kevin Merz. Run time: 89 minutes. (So come on time!)

*SPRING BREAK (February 27, March 1)*
Part IV: Why do parties matter? And where do they come from?

15. Why do parties matter? Why do party systems matter? (March 6)

Assigned reading:


16. Where do party systems come from? Electoral rules and societal cleavages (March 8)

Assigned reading:


17. Where do party systems come from? Authoritarian legacies (March 13)

Assigned reading:

1. Riedl, 2014, *Authoritarian Origins of Democratic Party Systems in Africa*, Cambridge University Press. Preface and Chapter 1 (skim after page 27; but be sure to see Figure 1.3) and Chapter 6.

18. How do party systems change? The fall (and rise) of Mexico’s PRI (March 15)

Assigned reading:


Part V: Election Fraud

19. Why do some governments steal elections? (March 20)

Note: Final project assignment details circulated

Assigned reading:


20. Where does fraud happen? Which politicians engage in it? (March 22)

Note: Paper 2 prompts circulated in class

Assigned reading:

1. Ziblatt, 2009, “Shaping Democratic Practice and the Causes of Electoral Fraud: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Germany,” American Political Science Review. (Focus on pgs. 1–8; bottom of pg. 12–18)

Part VI: Election Violence

21. Violence as electoral strategy (March 27)

Assigned reading:


22. Post-election violence in Kenya (March 29)

Note: Paper 2 due on Friday (March 31) by 11:59pm

Assigned reading:


Part VII: How do developing democracies transition to programmatic politics?

23. Demand vs. supply-side theories of clientelism’s demise (April 3)

Assigned reading:


24. Decline of clientelism in the US and Western Europe (April 5)

Assigned reading:


Part VIII: Why are there elections in full authoritarian regimes?

25. Local elections in China (April 10)

Note: Final project bibliography due night before class (April 9) by 11:59pm

No assigned readings today. Class will be a lecture. We will focus on:


End of class: Presentations

26. Student Presentations: Part 1 (April 12)

No assigned readings. Student in-class presentations.

27. Student Presentations: Part 2 (April 17)

No assigned readings. Student in-class presentations.

Note: Final project due Tuesday, April 25 by 11:59pm
Course Policies

- **Late assignments**: Late assignments will be docked 1/3rd of a grade for each 24 hours they are late (e.g., A becomes A−, B+ becomes B, etc.). Extensions are only granted if cleared with me in advance and supported by a compelling reason, for which I may request documentation. Be warned that I typically do not view being busy from extra curricular activities as a compelling reason for an extension, although I may make exceptions for unusual circumstances. Feel free to consult with me if you are unsure of whether you are eligible for an extension. Absent a documented last minute medical or family emergency, I will not respond to requests for extensions submitted less than 48 hours before the due date.

- **Accommodations for disabilities**: If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. We will work with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. Any information you provide to me is private and confidential.

- **Student wellbeing**: University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (734) 764-8312 and https://caps.umich.edu/ during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at (734) 764-8320 and https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources.

- **Academic integrity**: I have not encountered problems with academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, since coming to Michigan and do not expect to encounter any such problems in this course. But so that we’re on the record in advance in the off-chance that this does arise: I have a zero tolerance policy for plagiarism and will immediately report anyone suspected of it to the administration for disciplinary action. You will also automatically fail the course. Please familiarize yourself with the University’s statement on plagiarism.

- **Grade grievances**: If you believe a grade you have received is unfair or in error, you will need to do the following: 1. Provide an explanation to me in writing about why you believe the grade was in error. 2. Schedule an appointment by email to meet with me in person to discuss your complaint; 3. If my response fails to address your claim of unfairness or error, you may petition the department’s Director of Undergraduate Studies at the latest within the first five weeks of classes following the completion of the course. You must convey in writing the basis for the complaint, with specific evidence in support of the argument that the grade either was given in error or was unfairly determined. This formal complaint also should summarize the outcome of the initial inquiry to the course instructor, indicating which aspects are in dispute. Within three weeks of the receipt of the petition, the DUS will determine whether to convene the Undergraduate Affairs Committee, the student, and me for a formal hearing.