POLISCI 489: Electoral Politics in the Developing World
Winter 2019
MW 1pm–2:30pm
Angell Hall G115

Faculty
Prof. Noah Nathan
Email: nlnathan@umich.edu
Office Hours: 6733 Haven Hall, Mondays 4–6pm (see Canvas to sign up)

Graduate Student Instructor: Paul Atwell, PhD Student, Dept. of Political Science
Email: patwell@umich.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6556 Haven Hall, 2:30pm–3:30pm (or email for appointment)

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
• NOTE: All assignments must be double-spaced in a standard 11pt or 12pt font with 1-inch margins.

• Final project – “Policy Briefing Memo” (35% of grade; of which, 5% for first draft “element”; 5% for second draft “element”; 25% for final submission): Students will conduct research over the course of the semester on contemporary electoral politics in a developing country of their own choosing. This assignment will culminate in a 15 page policy briefing report, due Tuesday, April 30 by 11:59pm. Before preparing the final report, students will first prepare two 5 page drafts of elements of the report. The first of these drafts is due Thursday, March 14 by 11:59pm and the second is due Sunday, April 14 by 11:59pm. Students will receive detailed feedback on each draft from the course instructors, as well as via peer-to-peer in-class workshop sessions, and then will have an opportunity to revise the material from their drafts to include in the final report. Further details will be circulated in class.

• Two short papers (40% of grade; 20% for each paper) – There will be two 5-7 page papers based only on assigned course readings and lecture materials answering a prompt that I will circulate 10 days in advance. The goal is to practice writing a persuasive and efficient argumentative essay, while also demonstrating knowledge of course readings. Paper 1 is due Saturday, February 9 by 11:59pm. Paper 2 is due Saturday, March 30 by 11:59pm.

• Class participation (15% 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 may require documentation (doctor’s note, email from coach, etc). Barring an unforeseen emergency, you should notify the GSI of an absence in advance of the affected class.
• *Reading pop quizzes* (10% of final grade) – Our class discussions and activities will not work if students show up not having read. To incentivize reading, there will be 6 unannounced quizzes on the assigned readings throughout the semester, conducted at the beginning of the class session. These quizzes will take less than 5 minutes and will be *very easy* if you have done that day’s readings. I will drop each student’s worst score and average together the remaining 5 for the 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 worst score and average together the remaining quizzes for your grade (i.e., your best 4 quizzes will now be used to compute your grade, not 5). Any quiz that occurs during an unexcused absence will be scored as a 0.

**Writing Feedback**

This course is designed to provide detailed feedback on student writing:

• Students must attend at least one office hours appointment with either me or the GSI (whoever has graded the relevant assignment) to discuss one of the draft elements of their final report. Extra office hours times will be made available to accommodate all students.

• There will be two peer-to-peer writing workshopping sessions held during class on **Wednesday, March 20** and **Monday, April 22**, in which students will help each other improve the two draft elements of their final report. Attendance at these workshopping sessions is required.

**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 9)
No assigned readings.

2. Democratization in the developing world (January 14)

Assigned reading:


2. Levitsky and Way, 2010, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War, Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1. (Focus on pgs. 3-13, and, especially, 23-24. Be sure to see Table 1.1)

Part II: Why do voters sometimes support underperforming politicians?

3. Information constraints? (January 16)

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.)


January 21 – MLK Holiday. NO CLASS.


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 28)

Assigned reading:


6. **Coercion?** (January 30)

*Note: Short Paper #1 prompts circulated in class*

Assigned reading:


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Part III: Distributive politics and implications for voters

7. **Clientelism vs. programmatic politics** (February 4)

*Mini-lecture at end of class on writing in political science.*

Assigned reading:


8. **Where and when does clientelism happen?** (February 6)

*Note: Short Paper #1 due Saturday, February 9 by 11:59pm*

Assigned reading:

9. Who do politicians target? Core vs. swing voters (February 11)

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 13)

*Note: Final project assignment details circulated in class*

Assigned reading:


11. When core voters benefit: ethnic favoritism (February 18)

Assigned reading:


12. Is ethnic voting rational? (February 20)

Assigned reading:


Assigned reading:


2. Croke, Grossman, Larreguy, and Marshall, 2016. “Deliberate Disengagement: How Education Can Decrease Participation in Electoral Authoritarian Regimes,” *American Political Science Review*. (Focus on pgs. 579-580, 582-584, 587 (Figs. 4, 5), 591 (Fig. 7), 598-599)

14. Movie day! (February 27)


*SPRING BREAK (March 4, March 6)*

*Part IV: Why do parties matter? And where do they come from?*


Assigned reading:


16. Where do party systems come from? Electoral rules and societal cleavages (March 13)

*Note: First element of final project draft due, Thursday, March 14 by 11:59pm*

Assigned reading:


17. Where do party systems come from? Authoritarian legacies (March 18)

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. Peer-review writing workshop #1 (March 20)

*Note: Short Paper #2 prompts circulated in class*

Assigned reading:

1. We will workshop the first element of your final projects in class. You will be assigned to read several of your classmates’ submitted assignments.

19. How do party systems change? The fall (and rise) of Mexico’s PRI (March 25)

Assigned reading:


*Part V: Election Fraud*

20. Why do some governments steal elections? (March 27)

*Note: Short Paper #2 due Saturday, March 30 by 11:59pm*

Assigned reading:


21. Where does fraud happen? Which politicians engage in it? (April 1)

Assigned reading:


Part VI: Election Violence

22. Violence as electoral strategy (April 8)

Assigned reading:


23. Post-election violence in Kenya (April 10)

Note: Second element of final project draft due, Sunday, April 14 by 11:59pm

Assigned reading:


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

24. Demand vs. supply-side theories of clientelism’s demise (April 15)

Assigned reading:


25. Decline of clientelism in the US and Western Europe (April 17)

Assigned reading:


26. Peer-review writing workshop #2 (April 22)

Assigned reading:

1. We will workshop the second element of your final projects in class. You will be assigned to read several of your classmates’ submitted assignments.

Note: Revised and extended version of final project due Tuesday, April 30 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. Feel free to consult with me if you are unsure of whether you are eligible. 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 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**: It is very easy for me to detect copy and pasted text from online sources using anti-plagiarism software. So that we’re on the record in advance in the small 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 also 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.