POLISCI 489: Electoral Politics in the Developing World
Winter 2019
MW 4pm–5:30pm

Faculty
Prof. Noah Nathan, Department of Political Science
Email: nlnathan@umich.edu
Office Hours: Fridays 10:30am–12:30pm. See Canvas for a Zoom link and signup sheet for slots.

Graduate Student Instructor: Jeremy Boo, PhD Student, Department of Political Science
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30pm–2:30pm, or email for appointment. See Canvas for the signup sheet.

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 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.

Zoom Information
This course will be taught live via Zoom at the scheduled class time. The Zoom link and password are on the homepage of the Canvas site. Recordings and slides will be posted to Canvas after each class session, but your participation grade depends on attending live and participating in real time. If you are in a very different time zone or have some other complication that requires you to take the course asynchronously, please email me ASAP at the beginning of the semester so that we can arrange an alternative set of assignments for you.

Please always keep your camera on during class sessions. This allows us to build a community in our virtual classroom and encourages a more engaging class discussion. However, if circumstances with your living situation mean that you are not comfortable using your camera, just let us know. We will still expect you to participate actively via audio.

Assignments and Grading

• NOTE: All assignments must be double-spaced in a standard 11pt or 12pt font with 1-inch margins. All time deadlines are Michigan time, not the time where you live.

• 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 27 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 **Friday, March 12 by 11:59pm** and the second is due **Friday, April 9 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 **Friday, February 19 by 11:59pm**. Paper 2 is due **Wednesday, March 31 by 11:59pm**.

- **Reading response questions** (15% of final grade) – To succeed in this course it is *crucial* that you actually do the course reading as much as possible. For those of you who attend class live on Zoom, our class discussions and activities will not work if you show up not having read. As a commitment device to encourage reading, each student must respond to reading response questions for at least 8 classes in advance of the class session. Response questions (~3 questions per class session) asking you to quickly summarize and comment on the reading will be posted at least one week before each lecture on Canvas, under the “Reading Responses” tab.

  Your replies can be brief – a few sentences (50-100 words) per question. Replies will be graded on a simple scale: “check plus” (it’s clear you’ve done the reading), “check” (some understanding of the readings, but also confusion), “check minus” (clear misstatement or misunderstanding of the reading). *Do not collaborate with classmates or copy and paste – these should be your own words and opinions. Any copied responses will be counted as a 0.* All responses must be uploaded to Canvas by the start of each class period in order to be counted. You may submit responses for more than 8 class sessions if you hope to bring up your average.

- **Class participation** (10% of grade) – Each student is expected to actively contribute to our class discussions. We expect that you will attend all class sessions and will be taking attendance and noting participation. However, with the current state of the world, we completely understand if you must be absent for several sessions over the semester. There is no need to notify us to get an isolated absence excused; please simply watch the recorded session. However, if we observe that you are repeatedly absent and/or repeatedly not participating, your participation grade will be negatively affected. (Note: if you can only take the class asynchronously because you are living in another part of the world, please email me ASAP to discuss alternative arrangements.)

**Writing Feedback**

This is an Upper Level Writing Requirement (ULWR) course, designed to provide detailed feedback on student writing:

- Students must attend at least one (virtual) 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 **Monday, March 22** and **Monday, April 19**, in which students will help each other improve the two draft elements of their final report. We will contact you in advance of each session to arrange timing for peer groups to meet. Attendance for these two days 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 20)
   No assigned readings. Please attend – class involves a group activity.

2. Democratization in the developing world (January 25)
   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 would voters support underperforming politicians?

3. Information constraints? (January 27)
   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? (February 1)
   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?** (February 3)

Assigned reading:


6. **Coercion?** (February 8)

*Note: Short Paper #1 prompts circulated today*

Assigned reading:


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

7. **What is clientelism?** (February 10)

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

Assigned reading:


8. **Is clientelism efficient?** (February 15)

Assigned reading:

1. Kramon, 2016, “Electoral Handouts as Information: Explaining Unmonitored Vote Buying,” *World Politics*. (Focus on pgs. 454–468 only)

9. Where and when does clientelism happen? (February 17)

Note: Short Paper #1 due Friday, February 19 by 11:59pm

Assigned reading:

1. Weitz-Shapiro, 2014, Curbing Clientelism in Argentina, Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (Focus on pgs. 1–5; 11–14) and Chapter 3.

10. Who do politicians target? Core vs. swing voters (February 22)

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. (Focus on pgs. 68–70 (Section 3.1); skip Section 3.2; pgs. 71–top of 75 (Section 3.3)).

LSA wellness break – February 24 – NO CLASS

11. When core voters benefit: ethnic favoritism (March 1)

Assigned reading:


12. Is ethnic voting rational? (March 3)

Assigned reading:


13. Who votes in new democracies? (March 8)

Assigned reading:


14. **Movie day!** (March 10)

*Note: First element of final project draft due, Friday, March 12 by 11:59pm*


**Part IV: Political parties**

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

Assigned reading:


16. **Where do party systems come from? I: Electoral rules and societal cleavages** (March 17)

Assigned reading:


2. Huber and Suryanarayan, 2016, “Ethnic Inequality and the Ethnification of Political Parties: Evidence from India,” World Politics. (Focus on pgs. 149-155; 161-163; 184-185)

17. **Peer-review writing workshop #1** (March 22)

*Note: Short Paper #2 prompts circulated today*

Assigned reading:

1. We will workshop the first element of your final projects during class. You will be assigned to read several of your classmates’ submitted assignments.
18. Where do party systems come from? II: Authoritarian legacies (March 24)

Assigned reading:


19. How do party systems change? The fall (and rise) of Mexico’s PRI (March 29)

*Note: Short Paper #2 due Wednesday, March 31 by 11:59pm*

Assigned reading:


### Part V: Electoral irregularities

20. Why do some governments steal elections? (March 31)

*Note: Short Paper #2 due Wednesday, March 31 by 11:59pm*

Assigned reading:


21. Where does fraud happen? Which politicians engage in it? (April 5)

Assigned reading:


2. Ofosu, 2019, “Do Fairer Elections Increase the Responsiveness of Politicians?,” *American Political Science Review*. (Focus on pgs. 963–970, Figure 1, Figure 2, 974–977)

22. Violence as electoral strategy (April 7)

*Note: Second element of final project draft due, Friday, April 9 by 11:59pm*

Assigned reading:


23. Post-election violence in Kenya (April 12)

Assigned reading:


Part VI: The US as a developing democracy

24. Clientelism and its demise in the US and Europe (April 14)

Assigned reading:


25. Peer-review writing workshop #2 (April 19)

Assigned reading:

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

Note: Revised and extended version of final project due Tuesday, April 27 by 11:59pm
Course Policies

- **Late assignments**: We know that this is a tough time for everybody. If you anticipate needing an extension, please contact me to discuss your options *in advance of the deadline*. I cannot commit to meeting all extension requests, but will try to be as accommodating as the circumstances warrant. Note, however, that simply being busy with other coursework will generally not be sufficient reason for an extension. In addition, I have relatively limited leeway on the due date for the final assignment because there is a hard deadline for when I have to submit your final grades to LSA. Without arranging for an extension, 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.).

- **Academic integrity**: It is very easy 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. (I’m serious about this. I’ve done it before.) You will also automatically fail the course. Don’t be that person! Do your own work.

- **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.

- **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.