POLSCI 688.11: Elections and Distribution
Brian Min and Noah Nathan
Fall 2021
Wednesdays 2–4pm
2454 Mason Hall

Contact Info
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Office Hours: Via Zoom, see Canvas website for signup, Thursdays 10–12noon, or by appointment

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Office Hours: Via Zoom, see Canvas website for signup, Fridays, 10:30am–12:30pm, or by appointment

Course Description
This half-semester seminar surveys political science literature on five major topics in the study of electoral politics in democracies and hybrid regimes: voting behavior, turnout and political participation, political parties and party systems, distributive politics, and redistribution and the welfare state. The assigned readings on each topic mix canonical texts with examples of more recent research. Readings are drawn from all world regions. The course serves as one of the core modules comprising the Comparative Politics Proseminar and is primarily intended for PhD students in Political Science. Students from other graduate programs are also welcome. We will meet in the second half of the fall semester.

Scheduling information
Due to the compressed schedule of a half-semester course, we will begin with a full class session on the first week. Please do the reading for Week 1 in advance of our first class. If you would like, you can also submit reading responses or discussion questions for the Week 1 readings in advance of our first class (see below).

Assignments and Grading
The purpose of this class is for you learn this literature to serve as a foundation for your own future careers as scholars and teachers. Your core task is to actually do the reading each week and come to class prepared to actively engage in our discussion. We will assign grades because it is required, but grades are besides the point. Success is not about ticking off the boxes to get an A, but about doing the work to understand this literature deeply enough that you can teach it yourself and build on it in your own research.

- **Class participation** (50% of grade) – each student is expected to attend each class and contribute actively to our discussion. Let us know if you will be absent.

- **Reading responses** (15% of grade) – We will post reading questions (~3/week) on Canvas one week in advance of each session, including for the first week. These questions are meant to help guide your reading to make sure you are catching core arguments. If it’s helpful, please consult the questions to guide your reading every week. For two class sessions of your choice, submit written responses to the questions to Canvas by noon on the day of the class session.

- **Review article** (35% of grade) – Your final written assignment is a ~3,500 word “mini” review article, in the style of a piece in the Annual Review of Political Science, on a topic directly related to one of the seven weeks in the course. For this assignment, you are also responsible for including any readings listed under “Further reading” for your chosen week to the extent they are relevant to your chosen
topic/question, and may also bring in outside material as well (feel free to discuss this with us at office hours). The goal is to synthesize what you see as the main theoretical puzzles in the literature on your chosen topic, identify the main categories of answers to those puzzles that you see in existing literature, discuss the potential limitations of these existing answers, and then propose new puzzles and new directions for future research on the topic. The final assignment is due (via Canvas) by **6PM on Thursday, December 16.**
1. Theories of voting, part 1: performance, information, and accountability (October 20)

Required readings:


Further reading:

Economic, partisan, and performance voting:


Information and accountability:

2. Theories of voting, part 2: ethnicity and elite influence (October 27)

Required readings:


Further reading:

Ethnicity and identity voting:


Elite influence and control:


5. Holland Palmer-Rubin, 2015, “Beyond the Machine: Clientelist Brokers and Interest Organizations in Latin America,” *Comparative Political Studies*


3. Turnout and Democratic Participation (November 3)

Required readings:


Further reading:

General literature:


Institutions and participation:


Context, life experience, and participation:


Required readings:


5. Huber and Suryanarayan, 2016, “Ethnic Inequality and the Ethnification of Political Parties: Evidence from India,” *World Politics*


Further reading:

Parties in advanced democracies:


Parties in emerging democracies:


5. **Distributive Politics** (November 17)

*Required readings:*


*Further reading:*

Who gets what? The targets of distributive politics:


Democratization, decentralization, accountability and distributive politics:


6. Clientelism (December 1)

Required readings:


Further reading:

11. Schaffer and Baker, 2015, “Clientelism as Persuasion Buying: Evidence from Latin America,” *Comparative Political Studies*


17. Auerbach and Thachil, 2019, “How Clients Select Brokers: Competition and Choice in India’s Slums,” *American Political Science Review*

18. Cruz, 2019, “Social Networks and the Targeting of Vote Buying,” *Comparative Political Studies*


7. Redistribution and Elections (December 8)

Required readings:


3. Rueda, 2018, “Food comes first, then morals: Redistribution preferences, parochial altruism, and immigration in Western Europe.” *Journal of Politics*


Further reading:

Advanced democracies:


The developing world:

1. Lake and Baum, 2001, “The invisible hand of democracy: political control and the provision of public services.” *Comparative Political Studies*


