

Political Science 8643
Fall Semester 2006
Tuesday 1:25-3:20
Room: SSB 1383

Professor David Samuels
Office: SSB 1373
email: dsamuels@umn.edu
Office Hours: M 10-12

Graduate Seminar in Comparative Politics: Democratic Political Institutions

Objectives: Democracy is “the worst form of government, except for all the rest,” or so said Winston Churchill. In place of political communities that value such potential virtues as honor, courage, or faith, democratic states extol the virtues of liberty and equality. Yet as Locke, Montesquieu, Madison and others teach us, and as we continue to witness to this day, once a government is powerful enough to provide stability, security and the rule of law, it is also powerful enough to subvert the very democratic principles that its citizens may value. Scholars, citizens and rulers have struggled with this tension since antiquity, and this seminar explores these fundamental political questions. What is the best way to organize a democratic state’s political institutions? How can democracy balance the requirements of majority rule versus minority rights? How can democracy encourage organized political participation and contestation without devolving into disorganized political chaos? We will survey several topics and explore classic and contemporary theoretical and empirical research.

Format: Weekly readings introduce students to a debate, and only scratch the surface of the literature in that area. Some weeks could be the subject of an entire seminar; some topics are unfortunately ignored (e.g. federalism, political parties, bureaucracies, judiciaries...). For each theme the syllabus provides discussion questions to guide reading and note-taking. These questions are by no means exhaustive and do not provide a definitive agenda for seminar discussions; students are encouraged to incorporate their own interests into their literature reviews and into seminar discussion.

Assignments: All students taking the seminar for credit must do the assigned readings, write three papers, do three presentations, and participate in seminar discussions. Students will prepare two critical analyses of approximately 750-1000 words on part of one week’s readings. Each student will make one solo presentation and one collaborative presentation of their critical analyses; students will sign up for both presentations during the first seminar meeting. To accommodate discussion, **literature review papers will be due 24 hours in advance of the seminar meeting time.** Students will make a copy for each seminar participant and should also place one copy in the instructor’s mailbox. The papers/presentations should raise questions about the readings. If seminar enrollment requires students to prepare more than two critical analyses, only two of the papers will be graded (the student will decide which two).

The third paper will be a research design of approximately 2500 words (10-12 pages). A draft of this paper is due to me and to other seminar participants via email by noon on **Monday December 11th**. A research design is a project you *would* complete if you had the time and resources. Students will *not* be expected to actually complete the research for their project, but a research design is a good way to begin thinking about potential paper or dissertation projects. The instructor will distribute a “How to Prepare a Research Design” handout to guide your

preparation. Each student will be required to meet with the instructor individually to discuss his or her project and will be required to present the research design orally during the last class.

Grades: grading will be based on the following: critical analyses 25% each, research design 40%, and seminar participation 10%. Extensions, incompletes, etc., will be given out in accordance with department policy (that is, they will be actively discouraged!).

Readings: No books have been ordered through the bookstore. I strongly suggest purchasing the following books (on Amazon.com, where you might find a used copy, or directly from the presses, e.g.):

- Gary Cox, *Making Votes Count*. Cambridge, 1997.
- Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*. Yale, 1999.
- Matthew Shugart and John Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies*. Cambridge, 1992.
- G. Bingham Powell, *Elections as Instruments of Representation*. Yale, 2001.
- Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton, 2004.
- Daniel Posner, *Institutions and Ethnic Conflict in Africa*. Cambridge, 2005.

Many readings (the asterisked ones) are available on-line through the U libraries. Other readings will be placed on a seminar website.

Topics and Readings

Week One: Introduction: Approaches to the Study of Institutions (Sept. 5)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What is rational choice theory, and what are its strengths and limitations?
- 2) Why does rational choice create such a polemic among political scientists?
- 3) What is a political institution? What is not?
- 4) What is the “new” institutionalism and what is “new” about it?
- 5) What are the differences and similarities between institutionalist approaches?
- 6) When does an institutionalist approach to politics fall short?
- 7) Can an institutional approach offer a solution to the agent-structure problem (or the micromotives versus macrostructures problem)?
- 8) When is endogeneity a problem for institutional research? What can be done about it?
- 9) What epistemological, ontological or other theoretical differences distinguish different “approaches” to the study of political institutions?

Readings:

- James Caporaso and David Levine, *Theories of Political Economy*, ch. 6.
- George Tsebelis, *Nested Games*, ch. 2.
- Barry Weingast, “Rational-choice Institutionalism,” in Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner, eds., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* (W.W. Norton, 2002), pp. 660-692

- Gary Cox, 2006. "Lies, Damned Lies and Rational Choice Analysis." Forthcoming in I. Shapiro, R. Smith and T. Masoud, eds. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press. Download from Cox's website.
- *Kathleen Thelen, 1999. "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 369-404.
- *Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies*, Dec96, Vol. 44(4): 936-957.
- Robert Adcock, Mark Bevir and Shannon Stimson, "Historicizing the New Institutionalism(s)." In *Modern Political Science: Anglo-American Exchanges Since 1880*. Princeton University Press, forthcoming.

Week Two: Institutions: Contracts or Coercion? (Sept. 12)

Discussion questions:

- 1) What is principal-agent theory? What are its assumptions? What insight into politics does one gain through its use, and what about politics does principal-agent theory gloss over?
- 2) Representative democracy requires delegation, but to what extent are the ideas of democracy and delegation in theoretical tension?
- 3) To understand the process of delegation, and to understand when delegation becomes abdication, we have to assume politicians' motivations. How do we know what politicians want? How do we demonstrate that an existing principal-agent relationship is "optimal?"
 - D. Roderick Kiewiet and Mathew D. McCubbins, 1991. *The Logic of Delegation*, ch. 2.
 - *Gary Miller, 2005. "The Political Evolution of Principal-Agent Models." *ARPS*.
 - *Kathryn Firmin-Sellers. 1995. "The Politics of Property Rights," *APSR*, 89, 4: 867-881.
 - Douglass North, 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, pp. 27-35, 54-69.
 - Jack Knight. 1995. "Models, Interpretations, and Theories: Constructing Explanations of Institutional Emergence and Change," in Knight and Sened, *Explaining Social Institutions*, pp. 95-120.
 - *McNollgast. 1987. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control," *JLEO* pp. 243-277.
 - *Terry Moe, 1990. "Political Institutions: The Neglected Side of the Story." *JLEO* 6:213-53 (Skip the sections on presidents and legislators, separation of powers, and parliamentary systems, but read the conclusion.)
 - *Terry Moe. 1984. "The New Economics of Organization," *AJPS* 28(4): 739-777

Week Three: Comparing Visions of Democratic Institutions (Sept. 19)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Is democracy a matter of institutional design?
- 2) How is institutional design associated with the "performance" of democracy?
- 3) Assess the weight of institutional and non-institutional factors in determining the "performance" of democracies.

- 4) Do all institutions have equal weight in determining political “outputs?”
- 5) What exactly is a veto player? How can you identify one?
- 6) How compatible are the Shugart/Carey/Carroll, Lijphart/Powell and Tsebelis visions of democratic institutions?
- 7) What is Riker’s preoccupation about democracy? Lijphart’s and Powell’s? The others? Are these scholars worried about the same thing or different things? Does it matter?

Readings:

- William Riker, *Liberalism versus Populism*, ch. 1.
- Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, chs. 1-3, 16.
- G. Bingham Powell, *Elections as Instruments of Representation*, chs. 1-2
- Matthew Shugart and John Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies*, ch. 1.
- *George Tsebelis, 1995. “Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism, and Multipartyism.” *BJPS* 25:289-325.
- Royce Carroll and Matthew Shugart, “Neo-Madisonian Theories of Latin American Institutions.” Forthcoming in G. Munck, *Regimes and Democracy in Latin America*.

Week Four: Electoral Systems and their Consequences (Sept. 26)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Can the manipulation of electoral laws change the “quality” of democracy?
- 2) Do electoral institutions have a direct or interactive effect? How would we know? What is the “mechanism” through which electoral rules shape party systems?
- 3) What difference does the “number” of parties make for democratic performance?
- 4) Can the methods for selecting and electing representatives affect policy outcomes?

Readings:

- André Blais and Louis Massicotte, “Electoral Systems,” pp. 49-82 in Lawrence LeDuc *et al.*, *Comparing Democracies*, 1996. (SKIM: for informational purposes only.)
- Anthony Downs, 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, ch. 8
- Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, ch. 8
- Gary Cox, *Making Votes Count*, chs. 1, 3-4, 8, 10-11
- *Matthew Shugart, 1995. “The Electoral Cycle and Institutional Sources of Divided Presidential Government,” *APSR* 89: 327-43.
- *Terry Clark and Jill Wittrock, 2005. “Presidentialism and the Effect of Electoral Law in Postcommunist Systems.” *Comparative Political Studies* 38(2): 171-188.
- *Iversen & Soskice, “Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More than Others.” *APSR* 100(2) 2006.

Week Five: Choices of Electoral Systems (Oct. 3)

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) What factors are associated with a country's choice of electoral system?
- 2) What factors are associated with *changes* in electoral systems?
- 3) How does the study of electoral system change help us understand broader processes of institutional change? (see week 11)

Readings:

- Peter Katzenstein. 1985. *Small States in World Markets*, pp. 150-156.
- *Ronald Rogowski, 1987. "Trade and the Variety of Democratic Institutions," *IO* 41(2):203-23.
- *Carles Boix, 1999. "Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies," *APSR* 93(3):609-24.
- *Josephine Andrews and Robert Jackman, "Strategic Fools: Electoral Rule Choice under Extreme Uncertainty," *Electoral Studies* 24 (2005), 65-84
- *Kenneth Benoit, "Models of Electoral System Change," *Electoral Studies* 23:3 (September 2004), 363-389
- *Josep Colomer, "It's Parties That Choose Electoral Systems (or, Duverger's Laws Upside Down)," *Political Studies* 53:1 (March 2005), 1-21
- Pauline Jones Luong, *Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Power, Perceptions, and Pacts* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-18, 25-50

Week Six: Executive-Legislative Relations I (Oct. 10)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How can a government powerful enough to govern be effectively controlled?
- 2) What institutions distinguish parliamentary systems from presidential systems? What consequences do these differences have, and why?
- 3) What are the advantages and shortcomings of conceiving of political relationships within governments as "chains of delegation?"
- 4) How well (or not) does presidentialism fit into Lijphart's, Powell's or Tsebelis' conception of democracy?

Readings:

- Selections from Lijphart, *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government* (1992): Montesquieu (Chapter 2), Madison (Chapter 3), Hamilton, (Chapter 4). Bagehot (Chapter 6), Wilson (Chapter 7), Laski (Chapter 8)
- Gary Cox, *The Efficient Secret* pp. 80-87
- Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, ch. 7
- Shugart and Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies*, chs. 2-3, 5-8
- Wolfgang Müller, Torbjörn Bergman, and Kaare Strøm, "Parliamentary Democracy: Promise and Problems." In Strøm *et al.* (eds.), *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies*.
- *Matthew Shugart, 2005. Semi-Presidential Systems: Dual Executive and Mixed Authority Patterns." *French Politics* 3: (323-351).

- *John Huber, 1996. "The Vote of Confidence in Parliamentary Democracies," *APSR*.

Week Seven: Executive-Legislative Relations II (Oct. 17)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Do the apparent virtues or vices of presidentialism not hinge on something intrinsic to presidentialism?
- 2) What other variables might affect the "presidentialism versus parliamentarism" debate?
- 3) Is the separation of powers a veto point? When and why?
- 4) Multiple veto players and/or veto points: good or bad for democracy? When and why?
- 5) To what extent are institutions important for the survival or collapse of democracy, relative to other factors?

Readings:

- *Juan Linz, "The Perils of Presidentialism." *Journal of Democracy* 1(1):51-69.
- *Matthew Shugart and Scott Mainwaring, "Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal." *Comparative Politics* 29(4): 449-72.
- *José Antonio Cheibub. 2002. "Minority Governments, Deadlock Situations, and the Survival of Presidential Democracies." *Comparative Political Studies* 35(3).
- David Samuels, "Separation of Powers." For inclusion in the *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, Susan Stokes and Carles Boix (eds.)
- John Gerring *et al.*, 2005. "Are Parliamentary Systems Better?" Unpublished, Boston University.
- Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, chs. 14-17
- *George Tsebelis, 1999. "Veto Players and Law Production in Parliamentary Democracies: An Empirical Analysis," *APSR* 93(3): 591-608.
- *Josep Colomer and Gabriel Negretto, 2005. "Can Presidentialism Work Like Parliamentarism?" *Government and Opposition* 40(1): 60-89.

Week Eight: Legislative Politics (Oct. 24)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are the most important structures of legislatures? Why do they emerge and persist?
- 2) Are factors internal or external to the legislature more important for understanding the emergence, persistence, and change of legislative *institutions*?
- 3) Are factors internal or external to the legislature more important for understanding legislative *output*?
- 4) How useful are models developed for the US in understanding and explaining legislative politics elsewhere? How useful is Lijphart's (or Powell's) conception?
- 5) How does the party system relate to the internal structure of the legislature?
- 6) Would we expect to observe systematic differences in legislative structure between presidential and parliamentary systems? Why or why not?

- 7) Is parliamentary democracy a recipe for a weak legislature? Who “governs” under parliamentary systems: the prime minister, the cabinet, the bureaucracy, or the legislature?

Readings:

- Kenneth Shepsle and Barry Weingast, 1995. “Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions,” in idem., *Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions*.
- *Gary Cox, 2000. “On the Effects of Legislative Rules.” *LSQ* 25(2): 169-92.
- Gary Cox, 2006. “The Organization of Democratic Legislatures.” In Barry Weingast and Donald Wittman, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*.
- *John Huber, 1992. “Restrictive Legislative Procedures in France and the United States” *APSR* 86:675-87.
- Scott Morgenstern and Benito Nacif, eds. 2002. *Legislative Politics in Latin America*. Introduction, Conclusion, and Epilogue.
- Octavio Amorim Neto, 2002. “Presidential Cabinets, Electoral Cycles, and Coalition Discipline in Brazil.” In Morgenstern and Nacif eds.
- Ernesto Calvo, 2006. “The Responsive Legislature: Public Opinion and Law Making in a Highly Disciplined Legislature.” Forthcoming, *BJPS*.

Week Nine: Political Parties: Rational-Choice Institutional Perspectives (Oct. 31)

- John Aldrich, 1995. *Why Parties?* Chs 1-2
- Gary Cox and Matthew McCubbins, 2005. *Setting the Agenda*, Ch. 2
- Gary Cox, 1987. *The Efficient Secret*, ch 6.
- Royce Carroll, Gary Cox and Mónica Pachón. 2004. “How parties create electoral democracy, chapter 2.” APSA paper.
- David Samuels and Matthew Shugart, 2006. “Presidents and Parties: A Neo-Madisonian Theory” APSA paper.
- *Matthew Shugart, 1998. “The inverse relationship between party strength and executive strength: A theory of politicians' constitutional choices.” *BJPS* 28: 1-29.
- *David Samuels, 2002. “Presidentialized Parties: The Separation of Powers and Party Organization and Behavior.” *Comparative Political Studies*

Week Ten: Institutionalism and Identity Politics (Nov. 7)

- Daniel Posner, 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Entire.

Week Eleven: Institutional Change - Institutions as Dependent Variables (Nov. 14)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What factors explain institutional evolution?
- 2) How can we assess which factors are more or less important in institutional evolution? Refer back to our week on choice of electoral systems.
- 3) How do arguments about institutional evolution avoid becoming functionalist?

4) In what ways do the readings for this week shed additional light on Week 5's discussion?

Readings:

- *Paul David, "Clio and the Economics of QWERTY," *AER* 75 (1985): 332-37.
- Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton University Press, 2004. Chs. 1, 4, 5
- *Scott Page, "Path Dependence." *QJPS* 1: 87-115 (2006).
- Jack Knight and Douglass North, "Explaining Economic Change: The Interplay Between Cognition and Institutions," *Legal Theory*, 3:3 (1997)
- Robert Bates, "Contra Contractarianism: Some Reflections on the New Institutionalism," *Politics and Society* 16 no. 2-3 (1988): 387-401
- *Stan Liebowitz and Stephen E. Margolis. 1996. "Typing errors." *Reason* 28(2): 28-36.
- *James Mahoney, 2000. "Path dependence in historical sociology." *Theory and Society* 29 (4): 507-548.

Week Twelve: Institutions and Political Representation (Nov. 21)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Define "political representation." In what ways does institutional design affect the form and extent or degree of representation?
- 2) In what ways can institutional design enhance or detract from political accountability?
- 3) How are citizens "represented" differently in parliamentary vs. presidential systems? What are the consequences of such differences?
- 4) In what ways ought we expect systematic differences in representation and accountability between regime types? Are other institutional or non-institutional variables more important?

Readings:

- Read the on-line Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry for representation: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/political-representation/#PitFouVieRepJames>
- Adam Przeworski, Bernard Manin, and Susan Stokes (eds.) *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, chs. 1 (Intro) & 3 (Stokes)
- *Powell, "Democratic Representation in Comparative Politics." *ARPS* 2005.
- Powell, chs. 3-4
- Shugart and Carey, ch. 9
- James A. Stimson, *Tides of Consent*, Chs. TBA.
- *Samuels and Shugart, 2003. "Presidentialism, Elections, and Representation." *Journal of Theoretical Politics*.

Week Thirteen: Institutions and Political Accountability (Nov. 28)

- 1) How can a government powerful enough to govern be effectively controlled?
- 2) To what extent do you agree or disagree with Powell's conclusions?

3) In what ways would you propose building on Powell's research?

- Powell, *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*, chs. 6-10
- *Christopher Anderson, "The Dynamics of Public Support for Coalition Governments" *CPS* 28:350-83
- *Torsten Persson, Gerard Roland, and Guido Tabellini. 1997 "Separation of powers and political accountability." *QJE* 112.
- David Samuels and Timothy Hellwig, 2006. "Electoral Accountability and the Variety of Democratic Regimes." Forthcoming, *BJPS*.

Week Fourteen: Institutions and Economic Growth? (Dec. 5)

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What causes economic development?
- 2) What *measures* economic development?
- 3) What measures property rights and their "security?"
- 4) Thinking beyond this seminar, in what ways does the "political economy of property rights" speak of other political economy approaches?

Readings:

- Montesquieu. [1748]. Books XIV and XVII of *The Spirit of Laws*.
- *Douglass North and Barry Weingast. 1979. "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth Century England," *The Journal of Economic History*, 49 (December): 803-833.
- *Adam Przeworski and Fenando Limongi, "Political Regimes and Economic Growth," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7, 3 (1993): 51-69.
- Stanley Engerman, and Kenneth Sokoloff. 1997. "Factor Endowments, Institutions, and Differential Paths of Growth Among New World Economies," in Stephen Haber (ed), *How Latin America Fell Behind*.
- *Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. 2002. "Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution." *QJE* 117: 1231-1294.
- Adam Przeworski and Carolina Curvale, "Does politics explain the economic gap between the United States and Latin America?" NYU Department of Politics, Unpublished. 2005.
- *Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, James A Robinson. 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation." *AER* 91(5).

Week 15: Presentations of Research Designs (Dec 12)