Course Description:

This is a graduate seminar on political processes and institutions (e.g. parties, electoral systems, and branches of government) from a comparative perspective. Our main objective is to analyze the two central challenges confronting players in political institutions: namely, aggregation of interests and organization of the deliberative process. To do so, we will explore various propositions derived from the literature on these topics and consider their plausibility in different country cases.

There are four requirements for class participants:

1. Presentation: at the beginning of each class, a student will be assigned to introduce the key issues and debates from the readings. Each presentation should run approximately 10–20 minutes and they should be presented at the beginning of class. These presentations should describe key conceptual issues, define central arguments or debates in the literature, identify methodological challenges, suggest future avenues of research, and/or pose questions for further discussion. (20%)

2. Review Essay: along with the presentations, the student will also be required to submit a five page summary critique for one week’s reading. This assignment should not cover the readings from the week for which the student is leading the presentation. (20%)

3. Attendance/Participation: each student should be prepared to discuss the readings each week. (20%)

4. Final paper: the final paper can be about a subject/topic of your choice just so long as it deals with political institutions. By about sixth week of class, you will be asked to prepare a proposal for your paper and present it to the class. For this session, each student will briefly (5–10 mins.) present their research question to the class and describe their approach. Hopefully, the feedback from this meeting will allow the student to fine tune their research for the final submission at the end of the semester. (40%)

Books:


**Week 1**

**General Introduction**


**Week 2**

**Elections & Parties**


Powell, *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*. Parts I and III.

**Week 3**

**The Executive**


**Week 4**

**Executive Powers**


Shugart & Carey. Chs. 7 & 8.


Recommended:

**Week 5**

**The Legislature**

Morgenstern & Nacif. Chapters 1, 6-9, 14-15


**Week 6**

**The Judiciary**


**Week 7**

**Briefing Session for Final Research Paper**

**Week 8**

**Bureaucracies**

Huber & Shipan. *Deliberate Discretion?*


**Week 9**

**Public Policy and Size of Government**

Morgenstern & Nacif. Chapters 10-13


**Week 10**

**Corruption**


**Week 11**

**Economic Development**

Przeworski et. al. *Democracy and Development*. Chs. 3-5.


**Week 12**

**Federalism**


