V53.0505
The Electoral Process in Comparative Perspective OR
Comparative Politics of Elections and Voting

Why do people vote the way they do? Why do certain parties and candidates lose elections, while others win? How important is the economy in influencing election results? As democracy spreads across the globe, more and more people are voting. This course aims to study elections and voting as a truly international phenomenon. Topics closely related to voting and elections – such as electoral systems and partisan identification – are explored as well.

Requirements

The course meets twice a week (M, W: 3:30 – 4:45) for lectures. Grading is based on class participation (10%), an in-class mid-term to be held on March 7th (20%), a final exam (50%), and a 5-7 page paper (20%). The paper topic will be handed out in class on April 18th, and will be due at the start of class one week later on April 25th.

Readings

Students are required to complete all readings on the syllabus, and are encouraged to do so before the relevant lecture. As there is no research paper for this course, students are expected to keep up with the readings. There are approximately 150-200 pages of reading a week, but this varies significantly by week. In general, Parts I and V have less reading than Parts II, III, and IV, so please plan ahead accordingly!

The following books are required for this course. They can be purchased at the NYU bookstore:

There will be a reading pack, although it is not yet ready for purchase. Almost all of the readings that are not in the books listed above can be found in the reading pack. Purchasing the reading pack is highly recommended.

Office Hours

Professor Tucker will hold office hours on Thursday from 10:30 – 12:00 in his office in 19 West 4th Street, 4th Floor, Rm. 430. If you need to schedule a time to meet outside of the scheduled office hours, please email Professor Tucker directly.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Wednesday, January 17th: Introduction

Readings: None

PART I: SETTING THE STAGE

January 22, 24: Electoral Systems


Jan. 29: Party Systems

Dalton 2006, Chapter 7 “Elections and Political Parties”, p.127-147


Jan. 31: A Brief Guide to Reading Quantitative Work

PART II: HOW DO PEOPLE VOTE?

Feb. 5, Feb.7: A Sociological Approach to Voting


Feb 12, 14: A Rational Approach to Voting


Recommended:

Downs, Anthony (1957): Rest of the book.

Feb 19, 21: Retrospective Voting

Fiorina, Morris P (1981), Retrospective Voting in American National Elections. Chapters 1, 2, 6, 8, 10 (3-43, 106-129, 155-175, 193-212)


Recommended

Feb 26, 28: Strategic Voting

Cox, Gary W., (1997) Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, 10, 11 (p.1-69, 139-150, 181-224)


March 5th: Review Session / Catch-up Session

March 7th: In Class Mid-Term

March 12, 14: Spring Break

PART III: ECONOMIC VOTING

March 19, 21: Economic Voting in the United States


Recommended:


March 26, 28, April 2: Economic Voting Beyond the United States and “Conditional Economic Voting”


Tucker, Joshua A. 2006. Regional Economic Voting: Russia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, 1990-99. New York: Cambridge University Press. Read Chapters 1, 2, 8, 9; skim 5, 6, 7; If curious about statistical method, read first half of chapter 4, although this is not required. If interested in background on elections, read ch.3.


Recommended:


PART IV: TOPICS IN THE STUDY OF ELECTIONS

April 4, 9: Turnout

Dalton, 2004, Ch.3 “Political Participation”, 35-61.


Recommended:

April 11, 16: Partisan Identification


Dalton 2006, Chapter 9 “Partisanship and Electoral Behavior”, p.177-200.


Recommended:


April 18: Consequences of Electoral Rules

Norris, 2004, Chapter 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (p.3-36, 66-178)

Recommended:


NOTE: Paper Topic Assignment Handed out in Class on April 18th.
PART V: CASE STUDIES


April 25: Case Study #2: 1995-1996 Russian Parliamentary and Presidential Elections

Marsh, Christopher (2002). *Russia at the Polls: Voters, Elections, and Democratization*. Washington, D.C., Congressional Quarterly Press., Ch.5, (p.72-85), Ch. 6 (101-109)


Tucker, 2006, Chapter 4, p.131-144

*NOTE: Paper due at the START of Class on April 25th.*

April 30: Case Study #3: the 2000 US Elections


B: B: Pomper, Gerald M. (ed) *The Election of 2000*, Chapters 1, 4, 6, 8: (p.1-11, 73-91, 125-154, 177-201)