

40291

Political Science Field Survey, Part 2

Instructor

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Welcome to Political Science Field Survey. This is the first graduate seminar in Political Science. This course provides an in-depth overview of some of the central debates in contemporary political science, and is designed to enable students' active participation. The choice of readings emphasizes recent work, but some more dated classics are included for their importance in defining the direction taken by the literature. The substantive goal is to familiarize students with theoretical arguments and cutting-edge empirical evidence pertaining to central questions in political science. The methodological goal is to help students conduct cutting edge research. Students will develop their familiarity with the research process by: i) formulating sketches of research ideas around each topic covered in class, and ii) preparing a final research proposal on a topic of their choice and presenting it to their peers.

In the class meetings, we will "unpack" each of the readings, put their claims in context, discuss the shortcomings, and explore directions in which the discipline can and should move. By the end of the course, students will be able to "think like a political scientist." Given that a knowledge of political systems at the undergrad level is assumed by most of the readings, students should consult an undergrad comparative politics textbook (e.g., the Clark, Golder and Golder one) if they have specific holes in their knowledge. Needless to say, such a textbook is not a substitute for the assigned readings.

REQUIRED READINGS

The readings for this class consist largely of book chapters and papers. For each week, students are expected to be able to summarize the main points and describe the methodological approach of any of the assigned pieces. The instructor might also ask a student to defend the argument in a paper, or to discuss its shortcomings: in this case, students do not get to choose whether they argue in favor or against an argument/paper.

GRADES AND EVALUATION

Your grade will be based on the following:

- **(20 percent):** Class participation. This is a Ph.D. level seminar: fast-paced and in-depth at the same time. Students are going to be doing most of the talking: the instructor will mostly

ask questions to give the discussion some degree of direction. Because of this format, it is essential that every student has completed the assigned reading before class and is ready to participate in discussion. Your active and thoughtful participation is the key to making this seminar a success. Obviously, you should not miss class unless there are exceptional circumstances that keep you from being there.

- **(10 percent):** Sketch of research idea. For some of our classes, you will be invited to submit, ahead of class, 1-2 paragraphs outlining a sketch of a research idea (research question, possible data if empirical, sketch of study approach) inspired by the readings due for class. We think of this as useful training for one of the most important skills as researchers: producing research ideas, with the goal of filling some gap in existing knowledge.
 - **(30 percent):** In-class presentations. Each week we will feature one or two presentations (with slides) lasting no more than 30 minutes each. The presentation will be timed (exactly like a research seminar) and interrupted after 30 minutes, regardless of whether you have finished making your argument. The presentation should try to find the common thread among the readings for a given week, and will be used as a starter for discussion. In the last session of the course, students will present their research proposals to the class.
 - **(40 percent):** Final paper. This should be the first draft of a substantive publishable research paper (i.e., a “conferenceable” paper). Writing a paper like this requires asking a meaningful research question, placing it in the context of the literature, and providing an answer of reasonable quality using either deduction (e.g., a formal model) or evidence (e.g., statistical or historical analysis). Paper topics are to be discussed with the instructor.
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COURSE SCHEDULE

November 20 (Martin):

From Votes to Power: Government Formation in Multiparty Democracies

Background Readings:

- Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. Chapter 12.

Required Readings:

- [Martin and Stevenson \(2010\)](#)
- [Glasgow, Golder and Golder \(2012\)](#)
- [Kayser, Orlowski and Rehmert \(2023\)](#)
- [Martin and Vanberg \(2025, Chapters 3–7\)](#)

November 25 (Martin):

From Power to Policy: Executives, Legislatures, and Governance in Parliamentary Systems

Background Readings:

- [Strøm \(2000\)](#)

Required Readings:

- [Laver and Shepsle \(1990\)](#)
- [Martin and Vanberg \(2005\)](#)
- [Bawn and Rosenbluth \(2006\)](#)
- [Martin and Vanberg \(2013\)](#)
- [Goodhart \(2013\)](#)
- [Martin and Vanberg \(2020\)](#)

December 2 (Martin):

From Policy to Accountability: Outcome Attribution in Coalition Governments

Background Readings:

- [Powell and Whitten \(1993\)](#)

Required Readings:

- [Fortunato \(2019a\)](#)
- [Fortunato \(2019b\)](#)
- [Klüver and Spoon \(2020\)](#)
- [Fortunato et al. \(2021\)](#)

**December 9 (Martin):
Strengthening the Responsiveness Chain: Descriptive and Substantive Representation**

Background Readings:

- [Pitkin \(1967\)](#), Chapters 1–2)

Required Readings:

- [Mansbridge \(1999\)](#)
- [Gay \(2002\)](#)
- [Krook and O'Brien \(2010\)](#)
- [Lowande, Ritchie and Lauterbach \(2019\)](#)
- [Lax and Phillips \(2009\)](#)

References

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