

## CPO 4072 Comparative Electoral Behavior

Spring 2008

PC 424, 5:00-6:15 pm MW

Professor Tatiana Kostadinova

DM 484A

Office hours: M&W 3:00 – 4:30 pm, or by appointment

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### Course Description:

Elections are major events in the political life of any country – their results determine who will govern and what policies will be adopted. Research suggests that the behavior of the main participants in the electoral process, voters and politicians, is shaped by the institutions and the socio-economic context. In this course, we focus on how different electoral systems produce incentives for voters to participate in elections and to select for whom to cast their vote. We will identify the mechanisms through which different electoral methods affect party leaders in the process of nominating candidates, forming coalitions, organizing campaigns, and reaching to voters. Students are expected to learn how to characterize each of the main electoral system types and assess their role in improving representation. You will also gain experience analyzing their effects both nationwide and at the level of individual voters and parties, while accounting for the economic and social context in which elections are held.

### Course Requirements:

The final course grade is a weighted average of four components: participation in class discussions, two midterm exams, a semester paper, and a final (cumulative) exam. Students will be expected to prepare regularly their *reading* assignment for the day and be ready to answer questions. I will check attendance in randomly selected days. Students are strongly encouraged to come to class and take notes; active participation will make a big difference for your academic performance. The topics for the research *paper* will be chosen by students and approved by me. Those may include the political effects of the electoral system of a country, specific patterns of voting behavior of young voters, women, or ethnic minorities, formation of pre-election party coalitions, candidate campaign strategies, why do people vote, etc. A hard copy of the paper should be submitted at the beginning of our class on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Late submissions will be penalized 10% for each day after the deadline. The *exams* will be composed of identifications, short-answer and multiple-choice questions. The distribution and the grading scale are as follows:

### Grading:

The final course grade will be assigned according to the following weights:

Midterm exam I	20%	90-100 = A
Midterm exam II	20%	80-89 = B
Research paper	20%	70-79 = C
Final exam (cumulative)	30%	60-69 = D
Attendance/participation	10%	-59 = F

You need to notify me in advance in cases where you have serious reasons, such as illness or an unavoidable event, not to take the exam at the scheduled time. Please, contact me via e-mail or phone, and provide a document (for example, a note issued by a physician).

## **Texts**

Your daily reading assignments are selected from the following books that are available for purchase at the FIU Bookstore:

Farrell, David M. 2001. Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction. Palgrave Macmillan.

Franklin, Mark N. 2004. Voter Turnout and The Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies Since 1945. Cambridge University Press.

Anderson, Christopher J., Andre Blais, Shaun Bowler, Todd Donovan, and Ola Listhaug. 2005. Losers' Consent: Elections and Democratic Legitimacy. Oxford University Press.

## **Other Rules**

There will be no tolerance for violations of the academic honor code. All pieces of graded work should be product of your own thought and creativity. Cheating, dishonesty, intentional and/or unintentional plagiarism will be penalized, including with failure of the course. Academic standards of citations should be strictly followed.

Students with disabilities who need special accommodations with respect to testing and other aspects of their work for the course, should identify themselves to the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Whatever is necessary will be done to provide opportunities for participation in class to all students.

## **Schedule of Classes and Assignments:**

- 1/7 Syllabus review and introduction  
Farrell, Chapter 1
- 1/9 When the Electoral System is Majoritarian/Plurality  
Farrell, Chapter 2
- 1/14 Majoritarian Two-round Systems  
Farrell, Chapter 3
- 1/16 Proportional Representation  
Farrell, Chapters 4 & 6
- 1/21 No class - Martin Luther King Day
- 1/23 Electoral Behavior under Mixed Election Systems  
Farrell, Chapter 5
- 1/28 The Political Consequences of Election Rules  
Farrell, Chapter 7
- 1/30 Electoral Reform: Who, When, and How Changes the Electoral System?  
Farrell, Chapter 8
- 2/4 Representation and Stability  
Farrell, Chapter 9
- 2/6 **MIDTERM EXAM I**
- 2/11 The Puzzle of Voting  
Franklin, Chapter 1

- 2/13 Generational Replacement  
Franklin, Chapters 2 & 3
- 2/18 Rational Behavior of Voters  
Franklin, Chapter 4
- 2/20 National Determinants of Voter Turnout  
Franklin, Chapter 5
- 2/25 Individual Characteristics of Participation  
Franklin, Chapter 6
- 2/27 **MIDTERM EXAM II**
- 3/3 Winners, Losers, and Political Legitimacy  
Anderson, Chapters 1 & 2
- 3/5 The Winner-Loser Gap  
Anderson, Chapter 3
- 3/10 Changes in Losers' Consent over Time  
Anderson, Chapter 4
- 3/12 Individual Characteristics of Losers' Attitudes  
Anderson, Chapter 5
- 3/17-19 Spring Break
- 3/24 The Effect of Losing in Old and New Democracies  
Anderson, Chapter 6
- 3/26 U.S. Presidential Elections 2008: A Discussion on Primaries  
Articles in reputable magazines and newspapers
- 4/2 The Impact of Institutions on Losers' Consent  
Anderson, Chapter 7
- 4/7 Comparing Assessments of Electoral Democracy  
Anderson, Chapter 8
- 4/9 Losing and Support for Reform  
Anderson, Chapter 9  
**PAPERS DUE**
- 4/14 Understanding Electoral Competition  
Franklin, Chapters 7
- 4/16 Conclusions and Final Exam Review
- TBA **FINAL EXAM**