COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to provide a window into politics through the causal connection between electoral systems and representation. The primary message of the class is that the rules of an electoral system (or lack thereof) lead, in a predictable manner, to different kinds of representation. As such, we will be studying elections and representation simultaneously to explore the symbiotic relationship between the two.

The central questions of the course are: why do we have representatives? What kinds of representation are there, and what different values do the different kinds of representation achieve? How does representation affect policy outcomes? How does the process of election in turn affect the kind of representation? In essence, how do elections affect representatives and their creation of public policy? The segment on representation establishes why we have representation in government, who gets represented and how (geographic areas, parties, women and minorities, etc.), and how representation affects policy. The second portion of the class delves into the various kinds of electoral systems around the world, with particular emphasis on the differences between candidate- and party-centered systems.

Therefore, the course should appeal most to students, particularly political science majors, in American and comparative politics and to those interested in careers in campaigns, government reform, or the creation of public policy. The structure of the course is designed primarily to strengthen logical reasoning skills, especially in how a change in one area of politics (e.g. election law) can lead to changes throughout a political system. To further this understanding, you will engage in a series of labs designed to give you hands-on experience with data and to analyze the politics of elections and representation in terms of best-outcomes. These lab culminate in a term project where you create an argument about what the “best” electoral system is, focusing on questions of elections, voting rights, representation, government structure, and prominent policies.

Course Objectives: By the end of the semester students will be able to

1) Articulate the connection between electoral systems and representation.
2) Make decisions about the “best” electoral system based on trade-offs between representation, government system, campaigns, party politics, legislation, and policies.
3) Analyze a range of data relating to elections and representation and draw meaning from the data to support arguments.
4) Understand, and critique, the value of electoral systems and representation from the competing perspectives of a variety of political actors.

Course Format:

This is a pro-seminar course, which means that when we meet, our interaction will be driven by discussion (rather than lectures or “busy work”). To this end, we will meet only once a week, so that we can bring a greater wealth of energy and information to our discussions. This means that the class is also conducted in a blended format, which means that there is more online, at-home work than a normal class, and consequently there is less face-to-face time. This reduction in face-to-face time is also why I strongly encourage you to visit me in my office—either during office hours or not—if you have questions about the course, course materials and ideas, politics, or college.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1) **Participation** in classroom discussions is required. It will help you and your classmates to wrestle with the connections between electoral systems and representation. Additionally, since the concepts of this class build on one another, you should **attend all classes**.

2) The course is organized into two-week units. For each of these units, you will be asked to conduct statistical analysis of relevant data and write a **lab report**. These reports are due on the last day (Friday) of the unit and will be returned to you, with comments, at the next class meeting.

3) These lab reports—both data and analysis—will culminate in a **term paper**. That term paper will ask you to make an argument about which is the best electoral system in terms of representation, policy, and politics more generally.

4) Finally, there will be a comprehensive **final exam** at the end of the semester that will ask you to apply the knowledge and skills from the course.

COURSE EVALUATION:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lab Reports</td>
<td>40% (10% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**Participation:** Each week, you can earn a maximum of 15 points. 5 of these will be for completing the blended component of the course (online work or the lab session). 5 will be from attending the class discussion on Thursdays, and the remaining 5 from participating in those discussions. Thanksgiving week will be just five points for participation in the online component. Thus, there are a total of 215 participation points for the semester.

**Lab Reports:** Labs are due on the last Friday of a unit. They will be returned the following Thursday. You always have the option of re-doing a lab for half-again credit (that is, an original 70% redone to a 90% would have a final grade of an 80%) due the following Friday (at the same time as the new week's report). Additionally, I will drop the lab with the lowest grade of the semester.

**Term Paper:** “Construct an argument about what the best electoral system is. In your answer, you must include a discussion of the representation that comes from your chosen electoral system. You may also consider other questions of politics, such as the views of different political actors, campaigns, election administration, corruption in government, party politics, and policy outcomes.” You must use results from course labs to support your answer. A solidly argued and supported answer will be no less than 10 pages, nor should it be more than 20 pages. I will distribute more specific guidelines at the beginning of November. I am happy to consult with you on the term paper and review any drafts or preliminary material.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be held on Sunday, December 14th, 10:05am-12:05pm. It will be cumulative, covering material from the entirety of the semester. The exam questions will center around interpreting five data results or news stories. For each of these sections, there will be 2-4 short answers and one short essay response. There will be a study guide, distributed no later than December 2nd.

**Extra Credit:** There will be a few (2-3) extra credit opportunities throughout the semester. These will be to attend an on-campus event relating to elections or representation. If your schedule does not allow attendance, there will be an alternative short-essay question. These extra credit opportunities are optional; you do not have to do them. But if you do, it will increase the grade of your lowest-scoring assignment (includes participation) by 5%.
Grade Scale:

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<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>88-92</td>
<td>AB</td>
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<td>83-87</td>
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<td>60-69</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>59 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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** You must complete all assignments, including online activities, to pass the course.

COURSE READINGS:

As this is an upper-division course, I've assigned a few readings that are central to the scholarly literature on electoral systems and representation. We will be using each of the following books throughout the semester. Please purchase them through the bookstore or online:


Additionally, we will be reading excerpts from the following books. I will make these excerpts available via Learn@UW, but you may find it interesting to purchase a copy for yourself, especially if you have a specific interest, such as minority representation or electoral campaigns:


Other readings for the course are either journal articles—which I will make available through Learn@UW and the bibliography of which is located at the end of the syllabus—or news stories, which I trust your Google skills to find.

Finally, there will be quite a bit of statistics and game theory in this class. While I will cover this in lectures and online videos, some of you may also like to see the math in a textbook. I recommend the following as good sources for beginners:


**COURSE POLICIES:**

*Open Door Policy:* Weekdays between 9am and 5pm, I am usually in my office. You are welcome to stop by anytime to chat about the course or politics in general. I do have appointments throughout the week, so sometimes I may be unavailable. Mondays and Wednesday 3-5pm are set aside for time with you. If that time does not work for you, or you would like to meet in addition to those hours, we can easily schedule an appointment.

*Academic (Mis)Conduct:* In all your work, conduct yourselves with the utmost integrity. Do not plagiarize others’ work, do not paraphrase without citation, follow the rules of citation for whatever style you choose. In working with group members, be respectful and courteous. Your behavior reflects upon yourself and the university. You want that reflection to be professional and respectful.

*McBurney Students:* If you are affiliated with the McBurney Center, please contact me within the first two weeks of class.

**COURSE CALENDER:**

The second Tuesday of a unit is designated as “lab” work. For those days, we will meet in our regular classroom. A laptop will be provided if you need/want one. I and a technician will be on hand to answer questions and trouble-shoot any problems. The first session will orient you to the software. The latter sessions will focus on a particular skill in the research and data analysis process.

A friendly note of advice on the readings: you should do the readings on the topic before it is discussed in class. Since this is a pro-seminar course, our meetings will be largely discussion-based. These discussions take the readings as a point-of-departure, so if you haven't done the assigned readings, you won't be able to contribute to the discussion in an informed way. This has the immediate effect of lowering your grade and the collective effect of making for a poor discussion of ideas. The readings are listed in an order I believe will provide the greatest understanding and direction toward discussion and class assignments. I highly suggest you do the readings and activities in the order listed.

The readings average 60 pages a week in addition to online learning materials and activities. This should be manageable, as long as you do not fall behind. Hopefully the lab reports will keep you on a bi-weekly track, but if not, you may find yourself scrambling to find and understand the readings in the week or two leading up to the final and term paper. This never turns out well. One other thing I should mention—the reading load is not evenly distributed. Some weeks there are less than 20 pages; others more than 100 (especially early in the semester where we are trying to accumulate a lot of new information in order to fuel profitable discussion). Thus, you may find it to your advantage to push ahead on weeks where the reading load is relatively light.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Readings and Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 2 &amp; 4</td>
<td>Course Overview</td>
<td>Types of Government</td>
<td>Lijphart (1999) ch. 2-3 Online discussion forum</td>
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<td>Sept 9 &amp; 11</td>
<td>Lab Work – learning the software</td>
<td>Theories of Representation</td>
<td>Pitkin ch. 1 Podcast on Representation Podcast on Pitkin's 4 theories Farrell ch. 1 CSCR: citizen</td>
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<td>Sept 16 &amp; 18</td>
<td>No class</td>
<td>Types of Representation</td>
<td>Unit introduction podcast Farrell ch. 7.1-7.3 Pitkin, ch. 8-10 excerpts from Mayhew, ch. 1 CSCR: politician Online discussion forum</td>
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<td>Sept 23 &amp; 25</td>
<td>Lab Work – minority representation</td>
<td>Minority Representation</td>
<td>Canon Intro and ch. 1 Rush and Engstrom Intro CSCR: activist</td>
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<td>Skill focus: Descriptive statistics</td>
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<td>Sept 30 &amp; Oct 2</td>
<td>No class</td>
<td>Electoral Systems (SMD and PR)</td>
<td>Unit introduction podcast Farrell ch. 2, 3, 4, 6 skim Lijphart (1994) ch. 2 Video on Social Choice Theory CSCR: candidate Online discussion forum</td>
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<td>Skill focus: Probability theory</td>
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<td>Oct 14 &amp; 16</td>
<td>No class</td>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>Unit introduction podcast Farrell ch. 7.4 Massicotte et al, ch. 1 and 5.1 Lau and Redlawsk Intro Video on the Paradox of Voting CSCR: voter Online discussion forum</td>
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<td>Oct 21 &amp; 23</td>
<td>Lab Work – Fair and free elections</td>
<td>Special Interests / Lobbying</td>
<td>Unit introduction podcast Podcast on the Collective Action Problem Podcast on types of lobbying Wilson ch. 5.3-5.5</td>
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<td>Skill focus: Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Class / Activity</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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| Oct 28 & 30 | No class                                | Campaigns                                                            | Unit introduction podcast  
Massicotte et al. ch. 2  
Video on Median Voter Theorum  
Video on the Multi-party Nightmare  
Gerber et al “Persuasive Campaign Ads”  
CSCR: lobbyist  
Online discussion forum |
| Nov 4 & 6   | Lab Work – money in politics            | Campaign Finance                                                     | Farrar-Myers & Dwyre ch. 1  
Scarrow “Political Finance Comparative”  
CSCR: campaign manager |
| Nov 11 & 13 | No class                                | Legislative structure and cabinet formation                          | Unit introduction podcast  
Golder “Pre-election Coalition”  
Strom, et al “Cabinet Formation”  
Shafer ch. 7  
Chhibber / Kollman “Party Aggregation”  
CSCR: party leader  
Online discussion forum |
| Nov 18 & 20 | Lab work – Redistricting                | Redistricting                                                        | Abramowitz “Partisan redistricting” |
| Nov 25      | Individual meetings to discuss term paper | Thanksgiving break!                                                   | Unit introduction podcast  
Farrell ch. 8  
Online discussion forum |
| Dec 2 & 4   | No class                                | Political Consequences                                               | Rae ch. 4-5  
Crisp, et al. “Vote-Seeking Incentives”  
CSCR: policy analyst  
Online discussion forum |
| Dec 9 & 11  | Review Session                          | System Consequences                                                  | Farrell ch. 9  
Monroe / Rose “Unimagined Consequences”  
Boix “Rules of the Game”  
CSCR: political scientist |

**Final Exam, 10:05am – 12:05pm, Sunday, December 14th, Room TBD**
**Term Papers due at the beginning of the exam**
Bibliography of assigned articles:


