INTL 4300: Comparative Political Institutions
Fall 2018

Dr. Molly Ariotti
M W F : 1:25-2:15 pm
Location: Zell B. Miller Learning Center, Room 147
(BLDG 0081, RM 0147)

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:30-4:30 pm (or by appointment)
Office Location: 318 Candler Hall (BLDG 0031)
Email: mariotti@uga.edu

Course Description:

The goal of this course is to further your understanding of political institutions in the comparative context. Political institutions are often thought of as the « rules of the game, » and they influence the strategic choices that political actors make. We will cover a variety of topics including both formal and informal institutions, as well as examining the role institutions play in both democratic and authoritarian regimes. We will examine a number of competing hypotheses and the empirical evidence presented in support of them. As a result, the readings will take a number of methodological approaches.

Course Prerequisites: INTL 3300 or INTL 3200 or INTL 3200E

Course Objectives:

1. Develop a deeper understanding of political institutions and their effect on political actors.
2. Examine arguments made by existing scholarship and assess strengths and weaknesses in existing knowledge
3. Think critically about the role of both formal and informal political institutions in structuring behavior and outcomes
4. Think about the role political institutions play in both democratic and authoritarian contexts
5. Learn about the role political institutions play in democratic transitions

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to (1) attend all lectures; (2) complete the required reading before the start of each class; (3) complete all assignments. In the event of an emergency, it is expected the student will contact me with appropriate documentation within 24 hours of a missed class or assignment deadline.

Your responsibilities will often force you to make choices about what you need to prioritize. If you have a conflict and cannot attend class, I expect you to communicate with me in a timely fashion, preferably in advance of the absence. I will not take attendance every class, however I will collect group work and other in-class assignments that will make up your participation grade. As a result, in order to score high marks on participation, you will need to be in class. Because I expect you to attend all lectures, I will not post slides or notes online. You should try to befriend some classmates early on so that you can make a
copy of their notes in the event that you are absent. I will not make photocopies of my notes, nor will I hold a special make up class session during my office hours.

If you have any special accommodations, I expect that you will provide me with all necessary paperwork during the first week of class, and set up a time to meet with me to discuss what I expect from you.

**Assignments:**

I will discuss assignments in class, and after that discussion information about the assignment and deadline may be posted to eLC. If you are absent, I encourage you to speak with a classmate or come to office hours in order to be clear about the expectations.

Each assignment is due in class (paper copy in person in class, unless specifically noted otherwise). Late assignments will accrue a penalty of one letter grade (e.g. a B+ becomes a C+) each 24-hour period until the assignment is given to the instructor. I reserve discretion to set a deadline after which I will accept no further late work. It is always best to contact me directly (by whichever means you feel most comfortable) to discuss late work, or other reasons why you may have a problem meeting a deadline. If you know there is a conflict, it is also best to talk to me before the assignment is due, rather than the day of or after the fact.

**Grading and Scale:**

Class participation: 10%
Homework assignments (10, worth 5% each): 50%
Midterm: 20%
Final: 20%

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A (93-100)</td>
<td>C+ (77-79.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A- (90-92.9)</td>
<td>C (73-76.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+ (87-89.9)</td>
<td>C- (70-72.9)</td>
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<td>B (83-86.9)</td>
<td>D (60-69.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B- (80-82.9)</td>
<td>FAIL (0-59.9)</td>
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**Required Course Materials:**

There is no required textbook for this course. Occasionally readings or chapters excerpted from books will be placed on eLC for you to access. Otherwise, readings are available through the library website (in order to access these readings you may either need to be on campus or logged into your UGA library access account). If you have trouble locating a particular scholarly article, you can often find a copy posted on the author’s professional website (try searching their name and “political science”), or on Google Scholar. You may also use the university subscription to the Washington Post in order to access articles from the Monkey Cage blog which may be assigned as reading or discussed in class.
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Readings should be completed prior to class on the day they are listed. Assignments are listed on the day I will discuss them in class, and the due date is clearly listed along with the instructions below.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. While I might adjust the timing for topics if we are unable to cover them as planned, I will not move the exam dates.

Week 1: August 13-17
Introduction

Monday: Course overview, introductions

Wednesday: Challenges of measuring democracy

Required reading:
   (Skim this, updates parts of p. 11 in Lijphart that are a bit out of date!)

Further [optional] reading:
1. BBC. 2017. “Why don’t we elect MPs by proportional representation?”

Friday: Majoritarian democracies and consensus democracies

Required reading:

Bring at least one question from your readings on consensus and majoritarian democracies, and be prepared to participate in class discussion!

BRING HOMEWORK 1 TO CLASS TO TURN IN

Week 2: August 20-24
Types of Democracy: Parliamentary democracies

Monday: Introduction to three types of democracy (overview)

Required reading:

Wednesday: Parliamentary democracies

Required reading:
Further [optional] reading:

Friday: Delegation in parliamentary democracy: potential problems?
Required reading:

Further [optional] reading:

BRING HOMEWORK 2 TO CLASS TO TURN IN

Week 3: August 27-31
Types con’d: Semi-presidential democracies

Monday: Semi-presidential democracies
Required reading:

Further [optional] reading:

Wednesday: Problems with semi-presidentialism?
Required reading:

Further [optional] reading:

Friday: NO CLASS (CONFERENCE)

Week 4: September 3-7
Types con’d: Presidential democracies

Monday: NO CLASSES (LABOR DAY)

Wednesday:
Required reading:

Further [optional] reading:

Friday:
Required reading:

Further [optional] reading:

BRING HOMEWORK 3 TO CLASS TO TURN IN

Week 5: September 10-14
Executive-Legislative Relations: Making Governments

Monday: Do coalitions form everywhere?
Required reading:

Further [optional] reading:

Wednesday: Who gets to be in the government?
Required reading:

Further [optional] reading:
Friday: How are ministerial portfolios shared?

*Required reading:*

*Further [optional] reading:*

**BRING HOMEWORK 4 TO CLASS TO TURN IN**

Week 6: September 17-21

**Executive-Legislative Relations: Breaking Governments**

Monday: 

*Required reading:*

Wednesday: Strategic use of the vote of no confidence

*Required reading:*

Friday: 

*Required reading:*

*Further [optional] reading:*
**Week 7: September 24-28**

**Elections and Electoral Integrity**

**Monday:** Assessing election quality

*Required reading:*

*Further [optional] reading:*
1. Matthews. 2016. “North Carolina “can no longer be classified as a full democracy”.” Vox. [Also follow link to Andrew Gelman’s blog at the end for a debate about the validity of the EIP claims]

**Wednesday:** Observing elections

*Required reading:*

*Further [optional] reading:*

**Friday:** Discussion

We will have an in-class discussion about elections and what they can/cannot tell us about a country’s politics. Bring your questions from this week’s readings and lectures – I will call on you at random to contribute your discussion questions and respond to those of your classmates!

Use your country research from the homework due today (Homework 5) to inform your responses to discussion questions.

**BRING HOMEWORK 5 TO CLASS TO TURN IN**

**Week 8: October 1-5**

**Electoral Systems**

**Monday:** Majoritarian electoral systems (SMDP, SNTV, AV, TRS)

*Required reading:*

*Further [optional] reading:*

**Wednesday:** REVIEW SESSION

**Note:** No homework will be due this week. If you have questions on the material covered up until this week, be sure to bring them!
Friday: MIDTERM EXAM (in class)

**Week 9: October 8-12**

**Electoral Systems (Con’d) and Their Consequences**

**Monday:** Proportional (and mixed) electoral systems (Closed/Open list PR, STV)

**Required reading:**

**Further [optional] reading:**

**Wednesday:** Women’s representation

**Required reading:**

**Further [optional] reading:**

**Friday:** Corruption

**Required reading:**

**BRING HOMEWORK 6 TO CLASS TO TURN IN**

**Week 10: October 15-19**

**Parties and Party Systems**

**Monday:** Duverger’s Theory

**Required reading:**

**Further [optional] reading:**

**Wednesday:** Post-communist party systems in Eastern Europe

**Required reading:**
Further [optional] reading:

Friday: Evolution of African party systems
Required reading:

Further [optional] reading:

BRING HOMEWORK 7 TO CLASS TO TURN IN

Week 11: October 22-26
More Parties

Monday: Dominant parties
Required reading:

Wednesday: Ethnic parties
Required reading:

Further [optional] reading:

Friday: NO CLASSES (FALL BREAK)

Week 12: October 29 – November 2
Legislatures

Monday:
Required reading:

Wednesday: Can legislatures in developing democracies be effective?
Required reading:
Friday:

Required reading:

BRING HOMEWORK 8 TO CLASS TO TURN IN

Week 13: November 5-9
Informal Institutions

Monday: Overview of informal institutions
Required reading:

Wednesday: Civil society
Required reading:

Friday: Clientelism and personal politics
Required reading:

BRING HOMEWORK 9 TO CLASS TO TURN IN

Week 14: November 12-16
Institutions in Autocracies

Monday: Why build institutions in an autocracy?
Required reading:

Further [optional] reading:

Wednesday: Elections in authoritarian regimes
Required reading:

Further [optional] reading:
1. Simpser. 2013. Why Governments and Parties Manipulate Elections, Cambridge University Press. [Chapter 1 is available for free online!]

Friday: Legislatures in authoritarian regimes

*Required reading:*

*Further [optional] reading:*

**BRING HOMEWORK 10 TO CLASS TO TURN IN**

**Week 15: November 19-23**
**BREAK**

**Week 16: November 26-30**
**Wrap-up and Review**

*Monday: Institutions and regime type*

*No required reading, in-class discussion:*
Come to class prepared to discuss institutions in democracies and autocracies. Bring your own questions, and think about how you might answer the following questions:

1. What are some similarities between how institutions function in democracies and autocracies?
2. Can you see a pathway for authoritarian institutions to become more democratic? How do you see that transitional process potentially playing out? [Feel free to use a country example and explain how that informs your explanation.]
3. What long-term effects might the legacy of authoritarianism have for political institutions in a post-transitional context? What can a newly democratizing country do to mitigate the potential threat of a backslide towards authoritarianism?

*Wednesday: In-class review for final exam*

*Friday: NO CLASS (CONFERENCE)*

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy**

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University’s academic honesty policy, “A Culture of Honesty,” and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards
described in “A Culture of Honesty” found at: https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.