

POLS 762: NEW INSTITUTIONALISM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, SPRING 2021, 3 CREDITS

Basic Information

Professor: Dan Pemstein	Class Location: TBD
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Course Overview

Bulletin Description

This course surveys the new institutionalist literature in political science and examines applications of rational choice theory, and its extensions, to problems of politics and governance, while drawing on both theoretical and empirical research at the intersection of economics and political science.

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to provide students with a strong grounding in the scholarly literature on political institutions, and the literature on institutionalism as a mode of analysis. After completing this course students should be able to:

- describe and understand core theories of institutional analysis,
- think critically about institutional design, emergence, and evolution,
- demonstrate broad knowledge about how institutions structure political and economic behaviors and outcomes
- develop clear research designs to study question about political institutions, and
- effectively consume, critique, and communicate current scholarly literature about political institutions.

Required Student Resources

All readings are available on Blackboard. I will send students an invitation to join the course Slack workspace at NDSUPOLS762.slack.com. I expect students to regularly check this workspace for announcements and to use it to communicate with the instructor and classmates outside of class.

Evaluation

Summary

Discussion Leadership	30% (2 × 15%)
Research Proposals	36% (3 × 12%)
Participation	34%

Discussion Leadership

Each of you will be a discussion leader for two weeks of the course. Each course session will have 1–2 discussion leaders. When there are two discussion leaders, these two individuals should work together and coordinate in advance of the course session to complete the discussion leader tasks.

Discussion leaders have two tasks. Leaders should generate 7–10 questions that delve into specific readings, tie the readings together, and/or connect the readings to previous weeks. I expect discussion leaders to be particularly familiar with the week's readings and to lead a significant portion of class discussion. I also expect them to be able to answer specific questions that may arise about the reading. Leaders should circulate discussion questions to the Slack workspace no later than 7 PM the day before class.

The discussion leader(s) will also give short conference-like presentations on one of the required readings for the week in question. This presentation should be no longer than 15 minutes and should present the research as clearly and succinctly as possible. The rest of the class should engage the discussion leader in approximately 5 minutes of conference-like Q&A. The purpose of this task is two-fold. It will give each person professional experience giving a short conference-length presentation and it will also help to get the discussion going each day. If you want to talk with me about your presentation or discussion questions ahead of time, please feel free to contact me through Slack.

Research Proposals

Students will produce three 3–6 page research proposals over the course of the semester, jumping off of one week's readings. Each research proposal will identify a research question, propose a clear thesis based on that question, generate two testable hypotheses from that thesis, and describe data collection and analysis strategies for testing those hypotheses. We will discuss the research proposals in more depth during the first week of class.

Participation

I expect you to attend all class meetings. This is your opportunity to ask questions, discuss readings and other course material, and engage in activities that will deepen your understanding of course topics. Your participation grade will be based on both attendance and the quality of your participation, including demonstrating that you have thoughtfully completed the reading. I expect students to come prepared, and to be respectful of one another, attentive, and actively engaged. In-classroom discussions and activities are the foundation of this course, and fundamental to mastering the course material. In this class **it is ok to**

demonstrate misunderstanding when speaking up but it is not ok to hang back and not participate.

Towards the end of the semester, each student will write a short (1-2 page) paper making an evidence-based case for the participation grade that she feels she deserves. These papers, and the persuasiveness of their arguments, will form the basis for students' participation grades. Although you have substantial leeway in how you make your case for your participation grade, your self-evaluation should follow this rough rubric:

- A Perfect attendance, frequent and thoughtful verbal participation, deeply engage the material
- B Perfect attendance, regular and thoughtful verbal participation, deeply engage the material
- C Strong attendance, less regular verbal participation and/or lack of deep engagement with the material
- D Missed more than 2-3 classes and/or little to no verbal participation in class
- F Frequently miss class, no verbal participation

Class Policies

Grades

I use a flat grade scale: A=90–100, B=80–89, C=70–79, D=60–69, F=59 or lower. If you have a complaint about a grade you must type a formal appeal describing the problem. Your appeal should make a cogent argument for improving your grade. If applicable, attach a copy of the original assignment to your appeal.

Make-Up Assignments

You have substantial flexibility in when you sign up for discussion leadership and research proposals. In general, if you have a valid reason for missing a class session for which you have signed up, you may shift your leadership or proposal to a subsequent session. Students should therefore not require make-up assignment opportunities, except in exceptional circumstances. Students must arrange such make-ups on a case-by-case base and the instructor will only grant make-up opportunities when clearly justified and absolutely necessary.

Academic Honesty

The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the Office of Registration and Records. Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found at www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty.

Please make sure that you understand common standards of academic integrity and plagiarism and consult the instructor if you are ever in doubt. I have a no tolerance policy for

academic misconduct and students who commit such misconduct should expect, at minimum, to receive a failing grade for this class.

Discrimination and Harassment

NDSU is committed to providing a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment for all members of its university community. NDSU's policy on discrimination and harassment is available at www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/156.pdf and the equity office provides information about filing complaints here: www.ndsu.edu/equity/filing_a_complaint_at_ndsu/. Any form of violence or harassment, including sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking is unwelcome at the University. NDSU provides a Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Sexual Assault Resource Guide at www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/equity/Resources/Sexual_Harassment_Guide_PROV_1437.pdf.

Low-grade discrimination and harassment can be especially pernicious in a classroom setting. Please read the following blog post and work to avoid the behaviors that the post describes: bit.ly/36vwaus.

Please note that the instructor has a mandatory responsibility to report instances of discrimination, harassment, sexual assault, and retaliation, as described here: www.ndsu.edu/equity/reporting_responsibilities/. What this means is that as your professor, I am required to report any incidents of such misconduct that I observe, or that students or others report to me.

Electronic Devices

Students should put away their cell phones during class, although students with good reasons (e.g., parents of young children) may keep their phones on vibrate in case of emergency. I discourage using a laptop for note-taking because research shows that students retain information better when they take notes by hand and because they can be distracting to other students.

Students with Special Needs

Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and contact the Disability Services Office (www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices) as soon as possible.

Attendance

According to NDSU Policy 333 (www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/333.pdf), attendance in classes is expected. In this course, attendance is mandatory unless you have a valid reason to miss a session. If possible, you must notify the instructor in advance if you need to miss class.

Veterans and student service members with special circumstances or who are activated are encouraged to notify the instructor as soon as possible and are encouraged to provide Activation Orders.

Written Communication

I expect students to take care with their written communication, to proof-read their work, and to ensure that their writing is grammatical and clear. Scientific writing often uses passive voice, includes overly complicated vocabulary and prose, and makes comprehension unnecessarily difficult for readers. As a graduate student it is natural to copy this style as you build your own scholarly voice. In this course I will push you to develop a simple, clear, efficient, and engaging writing style. To get started on this process, and to see who is reading the syllabus, I will grant one percentage point of extra credit to any student who corrects all of the passive voice in the University-mandated language in this syllabus, and posts these corrections to my private channel in the Slack workspace.

Schedule

1 Studying Institutions 1

Crawford, Sue and Elinor Ostrom. 1995. "A Grammar of Institutions." *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 582–600.

Hall, Peter and Rosemary Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies* 44: 936–957.

Carey, John. 2000. "Parchment, Equilibria, and Institutions." *Comparative Political Studies* 33 (6/7): 735–761.

Blyth, Mark. 2003. "Structures Do not Come with an Instruction Sheet: Interests, Ideas, and Progress in Political Science." *Perspectives on Politics* 1(4):695–706.

Moe, Terry. 2005. "Power and Political Institutions." *Perspectives on Politics* 3(2): 215–233.

2 Studying Institutions 2

Thelen, Kathleen. 1999. "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2(1): 369–404.

Diermeier, Daniel and Keith Krehbiel. 2003. "Institutionalism as a methodology." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 15(2): 123–144.

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, Chapter 5.

Shepsle, Kenneth A. 2006. "Rational Choice Institutionalism." In Rhodes, R. A. W., Sarah A. Binder, and Burt A. Rockman, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*. Oxford University Press: 23–38.

3 Institutional Emergence 1

North, Douglass. 1990. *Structure and Change in Economic History*. New York: Norton Press. Chapter 5.

Greif, Avner, Paul Milgrom, and Barry R. Weingast. 1994. "Coordination, Commitment, and Enforcement: The Case of the Merchant Guild." *Journal of Political Economy* 102(4): 745–776.

Lisa Blaydes and Eric Chaney. 2013. "The Feudal Revolution and Europe's Rise: Political Divergence of the Christian West and the Muslim World before 1500 CE." *American Political Science Review* 107 (1): 16–34.

Boix, Carles and Frances Rosenbluth. 2014. "Bones of Contention: The Political Economy of Height Inequality." *American Political Science Review* 108(1): 1–22.

4 Institutional Emergence 2

Cox, Gary 1987. *The Efficient Secret: The Cabinet and the Development of Political Parties in Victorian England*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Boix, Carles. 1999. "Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 93:3: 609–624.

Cusack, Thomas, Torben Iversen, and David Soskice. 2007. "Economic Interests and the Origins of Electoral Systems." *American Political Science Review* 101: 373–91.

Ahmed, Amel. 2010. "Reading History Forward: The Origins of Electoral Systems in European Democracies." *Comparative Political Studies* 43(8–9): 1059–1088.

Mares, Isabela. 2015. *From Open Secrets to Secret Voting: Democratic Electoral Reforms and Voter Autonomy*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters TBD.

5 Institutional Change

Avner Grief and David Laitin. 2004. "A theory of endogenous institutional change." *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 633–52.

Page, Scott. 2006. "Path Dependence." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 1: 87–115.

Tsai, Kellee S. 2006. "Adaptive Informal Institutions and Endogenous Institutional Change in China." *World Politics* 59 (1): 116–141.

Onoma, Ato Kwamena. 2010. "The Contradictory Potential of Institutions: The Rise and Decline of Land Documentation in Kenya." In Mahoney, James and Kathleen Thelen (eds). *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power*. Cambridge University Press. 63–92.

6 Collective Action

Olson, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965, 1–52.

Iannaccone, Laurence T. 1992. “Sacrifice and Stigma: Reducing Free-Riding in Cults, Communes, and Other Collectives.” *Journal of Political Economy* 100(2): 271–291.

Ostrom, Elinor. 1998. “A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action.” *American Political Science Review* 92 (1):1–22.

Bawn, Kathleen and Frances Rosenbluth. 2006. “Short Versus Long Coalitions: Electoral Accountability and the Size of the Public Sector.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 251–263.

7 Principal-Agent Problems

Lohmann, Susanne and Sharyn O’Halloran. 1994. “Divided Government and US Trade Policy.” *International Organization* 48(4): 595–632.

Ramseyer, Mark J. and Frances Rosenbluth. 1997. *Japan’s Political Marketplace*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters TBD.

Miller, Gary J. 2005. “The Political Evolution of Principal-Agent Models.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 8: 203–225.

Schwindt-Bayer, Leslie A. and Margit Tavits. 2016. *Clarity of Responsibility, Accountability, and Corruption*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters TBD.

8 Commitment Problems

North, Douglas and Barry Weingast. 1989. “Constitutions and Commitment: Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth Century England.” *Journal of Economic History* 49:803–832.

Acemoglu, Daron. 2003. “Why not a political Coase theorem? Social conflict, commitment, and politics.” *Journal of Comparative Economics* 31: 620–652.

Keefer, Philip and David Stasavage. 2003. “The Limits of Delegation: Veto Players, Central Bank Independence and the Credibility of Monetary Policy.” *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 407–423.

Kokkonen, Andrej and Anders Sundell. 2014. “Delivering Stability: Primogeniture and Autocratic Survival in European Monarchies 1000–1800.” *American Political Science Review* 108(2): 438–453.

9 Informal Institutions

Helmke, Gretchen and Steven Levitsky. 2004. "Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(4):725–40.

Tsai, Lily. 2007. "Solidarity Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China." *The American Political Science Review* 101(2): 355–372.

Ledeneva, Alena. 2008. "Russian Blat and Chinese Guanxi: A Comparative Analysis of Informal Practices." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50(1): 118–144

Williamson, Claudia R. 2009. "Informal Institutions Rule: Institutional Arrangements and Economic Performance." *Public Choice* 139(3): 371–387.

Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2010. "The Best Laid Plans: The Impact of Informal Rules on Formal Institutions in Transitional Regimes." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 45: 1–23.

10 Political Regimes

Tsebelis, George. 1995. "Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism, and Multipartyism." *British Journal of Political Science* 25:289–325.

Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapter 1.

Ansell, Ben and David Samuels. 2010. "Inequality and Democratization: A Contractarian Approach." *Comparative Political Studies* 43(12): 1543–1574.

Gandhi, Jennifer. 2008. *Political Institutions Under Dictatorship*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters TBD.

11 Electoral Institutions

Cox, Gary W. 1990. "Centripetal and Centrifugal Incentives in Electoral Systems." *American Journal of Political Science* 34:903–35.

Carey, John M., and Matthew Soberg Shugart. 1995. "Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas." *Electoral Studies* 14 (4): 417–439.

Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Co-ordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-3.

Golden, Miriam and Eric C.C. Chang. 2007. "Electoral Systems, District Magnitude and Corruption." *British Journal of Political Science* 37: 111–37.

12 Parties and Party Systems

Huber, John D. 1996. *Rationalizing Parliament: Legislative Institutions and Party Politics in France*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters TBD.

Amorim Neto, Octavio and Gary W. Cox. 1997. "Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures, and the Number of Parties." *American Journal of Political Science* 41(1): 149–174.

Stokes, Susan C. 1999. "Political Parties and Democracy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 243–267.

Carey, John 2007. "Competing Principals, Political Institutions, and Party Unity in Legislative Voting." *American Journal of Political Science* 51: 92–1007.

Tavits, Margit. 2009. "The Making of Mavericks: Local Loyalties and Party Defection." *Comparative Political Studies* 42: 793–815.

13 Coalitions

Laver, Michael, and Kenneth A. Shepsle. 1990. "Coalitions and Cabinet Government." *American Political Science Review* 84 (3): 873–890.

Strom, Kaare. 2000. "Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies." *European Journal of Political Research* 37(3): 261–290.

Golder, Sona N. 2006. "Pre-Electoral Coalition Formation in Parliamentary Democracies." *British Journal of Political Science* 36(2):193–212.

Tavits, Margit. 2008. "The Role of Parties' Past Behavior in Coalition Formation." *American Political Science Review* 102: 495–507.

14 Distributive Politics

Stokes, Susan. 2005. "Perverse Accountability." *American Political Science Review* 99: 315–325.

Rickard, Stephanie. 2009. "Strategic Targeting: The Effect of Institutions and Interests on Distributive Transfers." *Comparative Political Studies* 42(5):670–95.

Golden, Miriam and Brian Min. 2013. "Distributive Politics Around the World." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16: 73–99.

Nall, Clayton. 2015. "The Political Consequences of Spatial Policies: How Interstate Highways Facilitated Geographic Polarization." *The Journal of Politics* 77(2): 394–406.

15 Political and Economic Development

Levi, Margaret. 1988. *Of Rule and Revenue*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson. 2006. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3.

Gehlbach, Scott. 2008. *Representation through Taxation: Revenue, Politics, and Development*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 3 and 4.

Iyer, Lakshmi. 2010. "Direct versus Indirect Colonial Rule in India: Long-term Consequences." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 92(4): 693–713.

Ahmed, Ali T. and David Stasavage. 2020. "Origins of Early Democracy." *American Political Science Review*.

16 Wrapping Up