

Political Science 140D: When Institutions Fail
Fall 2019
Mondays & Wednesdays, 4:10 - 6:00 PM
Wellman 106

Instructor: **Professor Ethan Scheiner**

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Course Webpage: <http://scheiner.ucdavis.edu/pol140d.html>

(this page will also be linkable from the course page at <https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/>)

Course Summary: This course offers a comparative analysis of electoral rules – and how (and when) they sometimes fail to achieve their desired ends.

Electoral rules are critically important to politics.

This was most obviously true in the 2000 U.S. presidential election, where one candidate won a majority of the vote but lost the Electoral College, thereby making him the loser of the election. (And this very nearly happened again in 2004!)

Other examples abound. In most polities that hold popular chief executive (such as gubernatorial and presidential) elections, electoral winners hold office for a fixed term, except in cases of malfeasance. However, California state law allows for a recall election, where the state governor can be voted out of office well before his or her term is due to expire.

Electoral rules vary widely outside of the U.S. Proportional representation (PR) is quite common in other countries. In most PR systems, parties are allotted a proportion of the seats in the legislature that is roughly equal to the proportion of the vote they won in popular balloting. However, in Turkey, only parties that win more than 10% of the popular vote are allotted seats. As a result, in the 2002 Turkish election, despite the fact that they together received only 54% of the vote, only two parties won representation. After winning only 34% of

the vote, the top party took 66% of all the seats, and was therefore able to dominate the country's politics.

In some cases electoral rules can even contribute to bloodshed. Despite winning under 40% of the popular vote, Salvador Allende was elected president of Chile in 1970. A minority supported president in a divided and unstable country, the ultimate result was a bloody coup against him that moved Chile to dictatorship.

However, Americans tend to be unaware of such rules. The above examples would be news to many in the U.S., and few have heard of rules such as proportional representation. Most striking, there is little understanding of even our own rules. In a national survey conducted at the time of the 2000 presidential election, 10% of respondents claimed to have never heard of the Electoral College prior to the election and 37% claimed not to understand the system. And many of the remaining 53% were likely to have overstated their understanding of the Electoral College.

As the above examples suggest, electoral rules vary widely but there is little understanding of these differences and the important role they play in political outcomes. POL140D offers an understanding of the way electoral institutions work, focusing on the rules used to elect presidents and assemblies. The course examines electoral rules in countries throughout the world, including the U.S., South America, Eastern and Western Europe, and Asia, and looks at both developing and developed democracies.

Aims of the course include providing an understanding of what types of electoral systems might be more or less appropriate for different contexts and helping students to be able to make predictions about different countries' politics even if armed with no other information about the countries outside of the rules used to elect politicians.

Required Texts:

*****Unless otherwise noted, all references in the syllabus to “online” or “course website” refer to my faculty website – not Canvas.**

- Moser, Robert G., and Ethan Scheiner. 2012. *Electoral Systems and Political Context: How the Effects of Rules Vary Across New and Established Democracies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
 - **On 2-hour reserve at the library.**
 - **The book is also available through the library system as an ebook.**
- Reynolds, Andrew, Ben Reilly, and Andrew Ellis. 2005. *Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook*. Stockholm: IDEA.
 - I will refer to this as “IDEA” throughout the syllabus.
 - Unfortunately, the book store could not acquire a copy, but (a) a couple of copies should be on reserve in the library and (b) a free copy is available in PDF form at <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/electoral-system-design-the-new-international-idea-handbook.pdf>
- See Canvas for information on most other reading.
- All reading listed for the course is required, unless otherwise noted.

While not required reading, I also encourage you to look at the following excellent blog on electoral systems:

- Matthew Shugart's Blog on Elections and Electoral Systems
 - <http://fruitsandvotes.wordpress.com/>

I recommend that you don't bring your laptop to class. There is evidence that using a laptop harms the ability of the laptop user to take in the information in the class and even hurts the learning ability of others in the class.

Assignments/Grades:

Students will be evaluated according to the following:

(1) Participation in class (10%).

- Very active and regular participation (asking questions and especially being involved in discussion) will lead to a strong participation grade.
- **However, short of substantial and regular participation (this includes not missing class), your participation grade will simply be equal to the average of all your other grades in the class – and therefore will have no effect on your overall grade.** (E.g., if you have a combined score of 80% on your other assignments, and you don't participate at all, then your participation grade will also be 80%. Your overall score therefore will be 80%.)
- Actions such as TEXTING, USING THE INTERNET/EMAILING (ETC.) IN CLASS, in-class sleeping, chatting, horsing around during class, cell phone use, reading the newspaper, missing class, regularly arriving late or leaving early, and discourteous language will lead to a low participation grade.
 - If it appears that students are surfing/viewing the internet/emailing (etc.) in class, I may ban the use of laptops/smartphones/etc. in the classroom.
 - **I will give a 0 for participation to any student that I see texting in class.** I am unlikely to give you any warning on this.
- Participation that indicates an understanding of the reading is particularly encouraged. (If in the course of your participation it becomes clear that you have not been doing the reading, you will not get the full 100% for your participation grade.)
 - **However, no need to let the instructors know when you are going to miss class. (In fact, please don't email us to let us know unless it is really, really important.)**
 - Attendance in lecture is not mandatory, but if you miss a number of class sessions, your participation grade will be no higher than your average on all of the other class assignments.
 - If you miss class and want to learn what material was covered, you will need to get notes or find out what was covered from another student in the class (and not from the instructors). You are also welcome to audio record the class lecture. However, as with any class, the instructors will be happy to answer any specific questions about the material.
- Actions that ignore the "Course Behavior and Expectations" may lead to a lowered Participation grade.

(2) **Midterm (35%) – 10/30 (W).** (Please bring blue book with lots of pages.)

- The exam will cover everything in the course up to this point.

(3) **Take-home Essay (25%) – due at Canvas by 4pm on 11/14 (Th).**

- Paper assignment will be placed at Canvas by end of day on 10/16 (W).

- Most likely, for the paper I will assign you a few articles to read. Aside from that, you should not do any extra reading (aside from what I assign in the class in general).

(4) Final (30%) – Wednesday, December 11, 1-3pm in our regular classroom.

- The exam may cover all material from the class, but emphasis will be placed on material after the midterm.
- Be sure to bring two (2) blank blue books (with lots of pages) to the final.
- You know the date and time of the final well in advance. Short of a serious personal emergency (serious illness, death in the family, military service – for all these things, you must provide documentation) or religious observance (in which case you must let me know at the start of the quarter), I will not offer alternative final exam dates.
- For in-class exams, you will turn in your blue books at the start of the exam period and then be given new ones. Blue books with pages torn out of them will not be accepted.

Numerical grades translate into letter grades as follows:

100 = A+

93.4-99.9 = A

90-93.3 = A-

86.7-89.9 = B+

83.4-86.6 = B

80 – 83.3 = B-

Etc.

- ***The translation of scores to letter grades is all set mathematically. I will not respond to requests to have me change your grade above what your score merits according to the above scale.***

For additional information on grading, please see:

Regrading Policy

<http://scheiner.ucdavis.edu/uploads/9/4/7/5/94754176/regrading.pdf>

Course Expectations

http://scheiner.ucdavis.edu/uploads/9/4/7/5/94754176/course_expectations.pdf

Important UCD Information for You

The campus requires that I notify you of the following:

- The requirement to include “notice of the Code of Academic Conduct” on all undergraduate and graduate course outlines (syllabi) per Regulation 537. You can provide notice on your syllabi however you prefer; it can be as simple as including a link to the [Code’s webpage](#).
- The authority for instructors to assign a student a maximum grade penalty of “F” for a course—as opposed to an “F” only on the examination or assignment in question—when “academic misconduct is admitted or is determined by adjudication to have occurred,” per Regulation 550.

Academic Participation Requirements for Students

Last year the U.S. Department of Education determined that UC Davis needed to institute additional measures for validating that students participate in their registered classes. To comply with this mandate, in September 2018 the campus will require students to verify that they have begun each course for which they are registered via the Academic Participation program. This program also encourages students to acknowledge their responsibilities regarding academic integrity and the Code of Academic Conduct, reinforcing our campus culture of honesty.

MyUCDavis will notify students online and through email on the first day of instruction to complete their Academic Participation verification no later than the quarter add deadline – for fall 2018 that date is October 11, 2018. Failing to verify academic participation by this deadline may result in a reduction of the student’s financial aid award. We call upon faculty and staff to assist in communicating this new requirement to students. A few examples of how to do this include:

- Faculty may include the link participate.ucdavis.edu in their syllabus, on Canvas, and discuss the requirement on the first day of class.
- Advisors and other staff could send additional notices to their students, and remind them during advising appointments.

For more information please visit participate.ucdavis.edu/faculty, or [contact an expert](#).

Class Dates, Topics and Assignments

The Instructor Reserves the Right to Change the Assignments as Circumstances Require

Changes will be mentioned in class, through email, and placed on the syllabus

The reading listed for a given class session is the reading you should do prior to that day.

ASSIGNMENT FOR EVERY DAY: CHECK YOUR UCD EMAIL EVERY DAY SO THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE ANY UPDATES TO THE COURSE.

I strongly recommend using the chart at the following link throughout the first part of the course to help you study. We won't go over it in class, but we recommend that you try to fill in all the cells as a study tool. Also, please feel free to ask questions at any point about the chart and filling in the cells.

http://scheiner.ucdavis.edu/uploads/9/4/7/5/94754176/electoral_system_chart.pdf

1. 9/25 (Wednesday): Course Introduction, Aggregation of Individual Preferences, Cycling/Majority Rule/Arrow's Theorem

- **Please bring a dark/bold/big name tag to put on your desk for the first few weeks.**
- **Prior to class, please read over the syllabus and course expectations closely.**
- **I strongly recommend that you read the following.** This book represents my learning philosophy, and I urge you to read it and take the ideas within it seriously:
 - "The Mindsets" (Ch1, pp. 3-14), "Inside the Mindsets" (Ch2, pp. 15-44, 52-54), and p. 245 Diagram. This chapter is from: Dweck, Carol S. 2006. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Balantine Books.
- In addition, you may find useful this short, [linked reading](#) on how best to read Political Science.

Required Reading for today

- Moser and Scheiner, Introduction (pp. 1-12)
- Poundstone, William. 2008. *Gaming the Vote: Why Elections Aren't Fair (and What We Can Do About It)*. New York, Hill and Wang. Pp. 3-19.

2. 9/30 (M): Ways of Voting and Aggregation of Individual Preferences

- William H. Riker. 1986. *The Art of Political Manipulation*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
 - Preface (ix-xi)
 - Ch.2 (10-17)
- IDEA, pp. 5-16 (beginning with "What Electoral Systems Are")

3. 10/2 (W): Cycling/Majority Rule/Arrow's Theorem

- Kenneth A. Shepsle and Mark S. Bonchek. 1997. *Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. Ch3-4, pp. 39-71.

4. 10/7 (M): Single Member Districts (SMDs) and Duverger's Law

- Gary W. Cox. 1997. *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
 - Ch2 ("Duverger's Propositions," pp. 13-33).
- IDEA, pp. 35-53

5. 10/9 (W): Proportional Representation (PR)

- Be sure to read the handout on allocating seats under d'Hondt – see the link to this at my webpage for the course:
http://scheiner.ucdavis.edu/uploads/9/4/7/5/94754176/dhondt_allocation.pdf
- Barry Ames. 2002. *The Deadlock of Democracy in Brazil*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
 - Parts of Ch1 (41-52, 56-76)
 - Parts of Ch 2 (77-83, 97)

6. 10/14 (M): Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) and Single Transferable Vote (STV)

- IDEA
 - "The Single Transferable Vote (STV)," pp. 71-77
 - "The Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV)," pp. 113, 117
- Poundstone, William. 2008. *Gaming the Vote: Why Elections Aren't Fair (and What We Can Do About It)*. New York, Hill and Wang. Chapter 9, pp. 162-71.

7. 10/16 (W): Mixed-Member Systems

- Moser and Scheiner, pp. 42-67 (Ch2)

By today, I will also post at Canvas

- The study guide for the midterm (which will be **held on 10/30** in our regular classroom & time)
- The take-home essay prompt and reading (the essay is **due 4pm Thursday, 11/14** at Canvas)

8. 10/21 (M): Ask me anything day

- 4:10-5pm: questions about how useful IR/Political Science majors are, helpful courses to take in college, career strategies, whether to go to law school, whether/when/in what to go to grad school, getting letters of recommendation from professors – anything else you can think of
- 5-6pm: questions about course material/take-home essay/study guide/prep for midterm

Reading – you will need to read this to prepare for the material for the next class session & the midterm

- Robert G. Moser. 2001. *Unexpected Outcomes: Electoral Systems, Political Parties and Representation in Russia*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
 - Ch3 (“Electoral Systems and the Number of Parties in Russia,” 32-55).
- Moser and Scheiner, pp. 70-77 (Ch3)

9. 10/23 (W): New Democracies and Lack of Party Institutionalization

- Moser and Scheiner, pp. 89-108 (Ch4) and pp. 149-172 (Ch6)

10. 10/28 (M): Social Diversity and the Number of Parties

- Moser and Scheiner, pp. 180-203 (Ch7)

11. 10/30 (W): Midterm

- The exam will cover everything in the course up to this point.
- Please bring blue book with many pages in it.

12. 11/4 (M): Presidentialism vs. Parliamentarism

- IDEA
 - “Electoral Systems, Institutional Frameworks and Governance” (pp. 129-138).
- Matthew Soberg Shugart and John M. Carey. 1992. *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
 - Ch2 “Defining Regimes with Elected Presidents” (18-27).
- Scott Mainwaring and Matthew Shugart. 1997. “Juan Linz, Presidentialism, and Democracy: A Critical Appraisal.” *Comparative Politics* 29: 449-472.

13. 11/6 (W): Combinations of Executive and Legislative Electoral Rules

- Matthew Soberg Shugart and John M. Carey. 1992. *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
 - **Required:** Ch9 “Electoral dynamics: efficiency and inefficiency” (167-205).
 - **Recommended:** Ch12, “Electoral cycles and compatibility between president and assembly” (pp. 259-72)
- **Required:** Peter Ordeshook. 1995. “Institutions and Incentives.” *Journal of Democracy* 6: 46-60.

November 11 (M): Veteran’s Day – No School

14. 11/13: No class – work on your take-home essay

- Anyone seeking an extension on the paper must get Professor Scheiner’s approval by 4pm today. Under no circumstances will I grant extensions after 4pm today.

November 14 (Thursday): Take-home essay due by 4pm at Canvas. Try to turn it in early. Technical issues will not be accepted as an excuse for turning in the essay late.

15. 11/18 (M): Minority and Women's Representation

- Moser and Scheiner, pp. 208-230 (Ch8)

16. 11/20 (W): Majority-Minority Districts, Gerrymandering, and the Power of Districting

- Engstrom, Erik J. 2013. *Partisan Gerrymandering and the Construction of American Democracy*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
 - Ch1 (pp. 1-18), "Gerrymandering and the Evolution of American Politics"
- **Available as an ebook through the library online system.**

November 21 (Thursday): Study guide for the final will go online by TODAY.

- The exam may cover all material from the class, but emphasis will be placed on material after the midterm.

17. 11/25 (M): Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)

- <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/7/24/20700007/maine-san-francisco-ranked-choice-voting>
- <http://www.spur.org/publications/article/2011-12-01/ranked-choice-voting>
- <http://www.spur.org/blog/2012-01-06/defense-ranked-choice-voting>
- <http://www.spur.org/blog/2012-01-06/trouble-ranked-choice-voting>

18. 11/27 (W): Day Before Thanksgiving – No class

19. 12/2 (M): Popular Initiatives and Term Limits

- Listen to : <https://www.kqed.org/forum/2010101856021/is-californias-initiative-process-out-of-control>
- Mathews, Joe, and Mark Paul. 2010. *California Crackup: How Reform Broke the Golden State and How We Can Fix It*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
 - "From Teachers to Janitors: Direct Democracy Demotes the Legislature" (Ch4), pp. 58-76.
- Kousser, Thad. 2008. "Term Limits and State Legislatures." Ch8 (pp. 117-133) in Bruce Cain, Todd Donovan, and Caroline J. Tolbert (eds.), *Democracy in the States: Experiments in Election Reform*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

20. 12/4 (W): Top-Two Primary, Redistricting Commission, Multipartyism in the U.S., & General Conclusions

Required

- Theodore J. Lowi. 1985. *The Personal President: Power Invested, Promise Unfulfilled*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chpt. 7 (176-212).

Recommended

- Dudley, Robert L., and Alan R. Gitelson. 2002. *American Elections: The Rules Matter*. New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, Inc.
 - "A Special Case Study: The Electoral College" (Ch6), pp. 131-158.
- Moser and Scheiner, Ch9

December 11 (W) Final Exam: 1-3pm in our regular classroom

- The final exam may cover all material from the class, but emphasis will be placed on material after the midterm.
- Please bring blue books with many pages in them.