

Theories of Political Systems and Parties -- Introduction to Political Science II

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| Code: | P-121 |
| Term: | Spring 2017 |
| ECTS credits: | 6 |
| Lessons per week: | 90 + 90 min |
| Language: | English |
| Instructor: | Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD. |
| Form of study: | lecture + seminar |

Course meets: **Tu 13:00 – 14:30 in Johnson Room and Thu 13:00 – 14:30 and 14:40 – 15:10 in Tatarka Room**

Office hours: arrange per email

Contact: kusa@bisla.sk

MOODLE: kabinet.bisla.sk/moodle

Prerequisites

P-111: Introduction to Political Science I

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should:

- Gain footing in concepts central to the study of political interactions and institutions within the field of comparative politics,
- Acquire knowledge of various types of institutional settings and designs in different political regimes,
- Be able to assess consequences of electoral and institutional designs on party and political systems,
- Apply theoretical constructs to specific case studies,
- Learn the ins and outs of an electoral campaign,
- Strengthen skills of individual research and writing, team work, and public presentation.

Contents

This class is a continuation of the Introduction to Political Science course from the Fall semester (P-111), further developing concepts central to the study of comparative political science. The class explores political interactions that stem from within the civil society and political systems, and political institutions that shape the modern societies.

This course is an interdisciplinary and interactive endeavor. We will examine the studied topics from variety of perspectives, through different academic disciplines, utilizing a course textbook, complemented by primary academic sources related to the topics we study. We will also approach our topics through experiential learning, utilizing role plays, simulations, and debates.

Required Readings

Textbook: Roskin, M.G. (2012). *Political Science: An Introduction*.

- Ch. 8 Public Opinion
- Ch. 9 Political Communication
- Ch.10 Interest Groups
- Ch. 11 Parties
- Ch. 12 Elections
- Ch. 13 Legislatures
- Ch. 14 Executives and Bureaucracies

Primary Sources

Shawn Powers: Examining the Danish Cartoon Affair
Andrej Školkay: Liberal Fundamentalists and the
Herman & Chomsky: Manufacturing Consent
Mancur Olson: Logic of Collective Action
Stein and Rokkan: Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments
Linz, J.J. : Perils of Presidentialism
Max Weber: Bureaucracy

These texts and extra readings for presentations or short assignments are collected in the **READER** and available on **MOODLE**.

Additional Readings and Sources

Full list of sources available at the course MOODLE site.

Evaluation Criteria

- 10% Active attendance in seminars, preparedness for class, participation in discussions
- 25% Weekly written assignments
- 20% Paper
- 15% National elections simulation
- 10% Seminar Presentation
- 10% Midterm exam
- 10% Final exam

Policies

- **Attendance and participation**
Attendance of classes is mandatory. Maximum of four absences over the course of the semester is permitted – however, keep in mind that this includes sick days and unexpected situations.
- **Plagiarism**
Plagiarism is a serious violation of BISLA's code of conduct. Incidents of plagiarism will automatically result in the grade of Fx for the course and will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee. For information on what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the [Assignment Guidelines](#) at the back of this syllabus, BISLA Guidelines on plagiarism (posted on your MOODLE course site) or check the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) for detailed suggestions and practice.
- You will work in teams during the simulation of national elections and are required to work together on those assignments. However, collaboration on individual weekly assignments is not permissible and will be considered as plagiarism. You may and are encouraged to utilize the assistance of the

BISLA Writing Lab peer tutors to receive feedback on your written work, tips on structure, style, or the use of academic sources.

- Be courteous and switch your cell phones off. **Electronic devices are not permitted** in the classroom at all during midterm and final exams. If you have special needs and strongly prefer taking notes on your computer, consult me.
- **Presentations have to be consulted** with me ahead of time. Schedule an appointment with me **at least one week** before your presentation is due.

Course Evaluation (%)

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|-------------------|----------|
| A – excellent: | 100-93%, |
| B – very good: | 92-84%, |
| C – good: | 83-74%, |
| D – satisfactory: | 73-63%, |
| E – sufficient: | 62-51%, |
| Fx – fail: | 50-0%. |

Topics and readings

1. February 21 and 23

Introduction of the course and division of the tasks

Thu: *Watching Manufacturing Consent*

READING : *The Propaganda model* (Herman & Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*) (READER)

2. February 28 and March 2: POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

TUE: How do media shape the political and the quotidian life of a society? Are they the watchdogs of democracy or the corporate conspiracies that aim to control and subdue? Are the new media more fair and effective in delivering the news globally?

READING: ROSKIN Ch. 9: *Political Communication*

3. March 7 and 9: MEDIA CONT'D

What is the relationship between the media, political leadership, and business? Are the media guilty of collusion with big business? Are they adversaries or accomplices of political leaders? What are the role and the limits of investigative journalism? The Propaganda Model and case studies from Slovak practice of covering corruption (MOKYS, "Babe", "Lone wolf in Hong Kong", hiring practices, hidden commercials,...)

Thu: *Presentations:*

Media as a tool of cooperation or conflict in diverse societies (Marshall McLuhan: *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man*)

Freedom of information vs. Security (Julian Assange: *Cypherpunks* (Introduction) - the new media, freedom, and surveillance/ Shaffer: *Live and Let Leak*)

Political Satire and its legal and moral limits (Shawn Powers, Andrej Školkay)

Reading: ROSKIN Ch. 8: *Public Opinion*

ASSIGNMENT on media due by Wed night

4. March 14 and 16: INTEREST GROUPS

Tue: **PASTA WARS!**

How do interests get represented in the political system? Are we equal in organizing and participating in interest groups? Are interest groups democratic in their nature and in their impact?

Reading: Mancur Olson: *The Logic of Collective Action*: ch. 1: *A Theory of Groups and Organizations*, pp. 5-52

Thu: Presentation: *Robert Axelrod: The Evolution of Cooperation*:
Michels: The Iron Law of Oligarchy?

ASSIGNMENT on interest groups due by Saturday 5pm

5. March 21 and 23

Tue: Interest groups. How do interests get represented in the political system? Are we equal in organizing and participating in interest groups? Are interest groups democratic in their nature and in their impact?

READING: Roskin Ch. 9: Interest Groups

THURSDAY: POLITICAL PARTIES: Intro

The twentieth century is the century of governance revolution worldwide. Political parties played an essential role in the transformation of politics to as we know it today. Is democracy possible without political parties? Is democracy possible even within political parties? To what extent do they represent civic interests? What defines a political party? How are they organized?

6. March 28 and 30: Political parties

To what extent do political parties define concrete political systems? How do political party systems emerge? What determines the emergence of persisting types of political parties within different countries? Which social cleavages, deep dividing issues in a society are significant enough to impact the organization of political parties?

READING: Ch. 11: Political Parties
Start reading Lipset & Rokkan

7. April 4 and 6 Political parties cont'd

What shapes the political spectrum in different countries? How did party systems emerge and evolve? What factors contribute towards their changing shape in the past few decades? Are party systems in the East significantly different from those in the West?

Tue Presentations:

Hanspeter Kriesi: Transformation of Cleavage Politics

Nick Sitter: Cleavages, Party Strategy and Party System Change in Europe, East and West

Europeanization of Political Parties

Reading: Lipset and Rokkan [READER]

THU : MIDTERM

ASSIGNMENT on political parties due March on Sunday

8. April 11 and 13: ELECTIONS

What motivates people to come to the ballot box? What factors influence how we vote? How are campaigns run in different countries? Are we free to vote as we like?

Reading: Ch. 12: Elections

Thu Presentations:

US elections – campaign financing and/or use of big data to shape campaign messages

Analysis of the Slovak (or other) parliamentary elections: how do we use preferential voting?

9. April 18 and 19

READING WEEK

Prepare for the National Elections Simulation. Start researching the relevant information on your party, party and electoral system from the perspective of the role you will be playing in the simulation.

10. April 25 and 27 NATIONAL ELECTIONS SIMULATION

Consult the Assignment Guidelines at the back of the Syllabus for detailed instructions.

- Tue: Present an overview of the party, its background, main issues...
- Thu : Present timetable of the campaign and campaign launch (present a political program)
(JOINT CLASS on Thu at 1.00 pm in Spitzer Room)

11. May 2 and 4: NATIONAL ELECTIONS SIMULATION

Tue: Present a **campaign speech**

Present promotional materials (posters, leaflets, video spots...) and a campaign brief

Thu: All candidates debate with news conference

(JOINT CLASS on Thu at 1.00 pm in Spitzer Room)

12. May 9 and 11 LEGISLATURES

MAY 9: MONDAY SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

THURSDAY: LEGISLATURES

Institutional design determines the character and the operation of political systems. How did the basic political institutions evolve and what are their mutual relations and checks on each other? Is parliamentary system better than a presidential one for democratic governance?

Reading: Roskin Ch. 13: Legislatures

Thu: Presentation: Lijphart: Consociational Democracy

13. May 16 and 18: LEGISLATURES

Institutional design determines the character and the operation of political systems. How did the basic political institutions evolve and what are their mutual relations and checks on each other? Is parliamentary system better than a presidential one for democratic governance?

Reading: Roskin Ch. 13: Legislatures and J.J. Linz: The Perils of Presidentialism (Reader)

Tue presentations: Excerpt from Lijphart: Parliamentary versus Presidential Government (Baguehot, Wilson, Laski)

Remington: Parliament and the Dominant Party Regime

Weekly assignment on legislatures due by Saturday

14. May 23 and 25: EXECUTIVES AND BUREAUCRACIES

What defines a good civil servant? When does civil service become the red tape? Who controls the agenda? What happens when bureaucracy captures the state? How much can a political leader lead?

Reading: Ch. 14: Executives and Bureaucracies

Reading: Max Weber: Bureaucracy

THU Presentations:

Bureaucratic Pathologies (James Q Wilson, Barnett, Finnemore)

EU Bureaucracy as a separate class? (Elinas and Suleiman)

Final paper of your political party dues on Saturday

15. May 30 and June 1

Review for the final

FINAL EXAM

Guidelines for Assignments

Assignments consist of four short written assignments and one longer, final paper, one presentation in the class, taking part in the National Elections Simulation, and a midterm and final.

All assignments are mandatory to pass this course.

Note: **It is not possible to upload assignments into MOODLE past their deadline.**

Short seminar presentations

Each student will present at least one topic over the course of the semester. This entails a fair summary of a selected text, but will also ask you to engage the text, find an example of issues it describes and draft questions for discussion in class – simply to do a bit of independent research as well. Presentation should be **15-20 mins** long, with 10 minutes reserved for further discussion. Presentation should be **concise and structured**, summarizing the main idea of the text, key arguments, offer **illustrations** of those arguments, **their evaluation and critique and questions for discussion**. You are expected to **lead a short discussion** with your colleagues after your presentation. If it helps your presentation, **use PowerPoint (or Prezi) and/or refer to your handout**.

Produce a one page long, well structured handout for your colleagues, summarizing the main points and points and questions for discussion. Handout is not a narrative summary of the entire article, but rather a succinct presentation of the core arguments of the text. Offer a very brief summary of the main idea at the beginning. Use bullet points to list key arguments. Use visuals if possible (figures, images, tables, models...). Submit the handout via Moodle as well.

At the end, **list points of critique** and **questions for discussion**.

An excellent presentation will **rely on more than one source**, apply the text to real life situations, use examples and illustrations, and engage students in discussion. It is a given that you also have to be familiar with and able to link the presented topic to the core course readings.

NOTE: If you don't turn up for your presentation or you come unprepared, you will automatically receive 0 points on your presentation. If you are sick or have an unexpected situation, let me know well ahead of the time (i.e. well **more than 24 hours before**).

Do not prepare your presentation one day before it is due. You will choose topic and receive the corresponding during the first week of classes. **SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT** with me at least a week before to go over your presentation plan.

Short assignments

You will write four structured reflections on the core texts you are reading. While not specifically in **AQCI format**, do keep that basic structure in mind (structure should be following the outline “argument – question/problem – connection (to another text or context) – implication/conclusion”), it will help you formulate a strong line of argument. Assignment topics will be posted on MOODLE and should be submitted through MOODLE as well. Remember that each weekly assignment is a short essay, this it should be structured and formatted as such. Refer to the handout (also posted on Moodle) *Written Assignments* for more detailed pointers and for evaluation criteria.

A short paper

In May, you will write a short paper directly related to the topics and readings of the course. The short paper will summarize what you've learned about the political party you represented during the National Elections Simulation.

The paper (5 -7 norm pages) should present historical, political, cultural background of the chosen political party, broader context (what is the social, political environment in a country that the party operates in), and it should analyze the party in the light of the texts we've been reading (min. referencing Roskin and Lipset and Rokkan). The paper should outline the party's main agenda points and conclude with a look ahead – prospects of the party in the next elections and further future.

Excellent paper will be able to connect a broad range of studied literature as well as lessons learned from other political parties' campaigns to your own experience and make explicit or implicit comparison to electoral and party systems covered within our elections simulation.

Format and APA citation style

All of your written work **must adhere to APA citation and style guide**. This means citing sources in the text and including a bibliography at the end of each written assignment.

Make sure your written assignments are formatted properly, including your name, course title, paper title (be creative!), page numbers.

Midterm and final exams

There will be one midterm exam before the Reading Week and one final exam on the last week of the course.

The format is straightforward: you will be asked to define and explain a list of a few key concepts from the required readings and class discussions. The second section includes a number of multiple choice questions or a problem-solving exercise. The third section is a short essay.

TAKE NOTES in class: expect that what is discussed in the class can appear in the midterm or final.

National elections simulation

For two weeks, you and your colleagues will simulate an electoral campaign for a political party of your choice. The parties can be from various countries, keeping in mind researchability of the subject of your choice. Ideally, **choose a party from a country where there is an upcoming parliamentary election in the coming months (use www.electionguide.org to find out where election is approaching)**.

You will work in teams of 3 or 4 people, each person serving in a different function (party leader, campaign manager, fundraiser, research cell person,...) of a campaign team member. We will divide up the teams on the second week of the semester, however, talk to your colleagues about your preferences beforehand.

Basic elements of the individual tasks of the team are outlined below.

NOTE: detailed instructions will be handed out separately.

1. **Present** an overview of the party, historical, social, cultural background, its organization, membership, main program and key issues, strategies, methods of communication with the public, its' position within the political system (and its main features). List and explain the main issues in the national elections in the country of your party.

2. **Present a campaign strategy.** This step involves researching the legal and institutional electoral design, planning a strategy and a timetable for the campaign and a coherent political program with which you enter the campaign.
3. **Present a campaign speech.** Party leaders will kick off the campaign with a campaign speech. Research existing speeches of your candidate, his or her style and personality. Candidates will present the speeches at a press conference, where students take part of the press corps.
4. **Present promotional materials** (posters, leaflets, video spots...). Create original promotional materials in whatever way, shape or form. Here, creativity knows no bounds.
5. **All candidates debate** will conclude the campaign round. Other students will take turns in serving as the debate host.

Following the all candidates debate, students will vote on the winning candidate, followed by a brief victory speech of the candidate.