

# PS 7206

## Comparative Political Institutions

Fall 2017  
Wednesdays, 12-2:45 pm  
Derby 2078

Sara Watson  
2125 Derby Hall  
watson.584@osu.edu

This class is about the role that institutions play in structuring political life, and vice versa. We adopt an explicitly comparative perspective, considering three broad sets of institutions—political institutions; market institutions; and social institutions—and how they interact in different settings. Substantively, the course will interrogate a series of broad questions about the causes and consequences of varying institutional configurations, asking questions such as: When and why do democratic vs autocratic institutions arise, and how do they persist?; How and why do the institutions that regulate market vary across time and space? What role do societal institutions play in shaping democratic and autocratic politics? The course will explore these questions through an examination of institutional politics in different geographical areas, including East and West Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the United States.

We will mostly read books in this course. This choice is purposeful on my part. My goal in assigning books is expose you to scholars asking questions that cannot (one would hope!) be convincingly answered in 8000 words—a common word-count limit for many contemporary journal articles. By focusing mostly on books, I want you to spend time thinking critically about how authors develop concepts and build sustained arguments; how they situate their arguments intellectually; and the evidence they use to support their claims. For each book we read, I want us to think about why the authors make the choices they do; whether such choices are convincing; how else they might have approached the question under consideration.

### **Requirements**

In addition to doing all the assigned readings carefully before class and attending class regularly, there are three course requirements.

- A. *Weekly participation in class discussions.* I expect everyone to come to class having read and thought about the assigned reading, and prepared to contribute to class discussions. 20 percent of course grade.
- B. *Presentations.* Twice each semester, students will join in groups of two (perhaps three) and will give a brief powerpoint presentation on the work under consideration (this will be useful for everyone later, as they prepare their comps), and will lead a discussion of the week's readings. Your job here is to raise questions for discussion. 30 percent of course grade.
- C. *Final Paper.* A research paper (or grant proposal with literature review/prospectus draft) on a topic of your choice will be due at the end of the semester. The paper should be 20-25 pages long. 50% of course grade.

### ***Students with Disabilities***

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## **Schedule of Classes**

### **1. Introductions**

### **2. No class- Prof Watson at APSA**

*But: Background reading*

Rosemary Taylor and Peter Hall. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutions."

Avner Greif and Christopher Kingston. 2011. "Institutions: Rules or Equilibria?" in Schofield and Caballero (eds.), *Political Economy of Institutions*.

## Democratic Institutions

### **3. Electoral Rules: Causes and Consequences**

Amel Ahmed. 2013. *Democracy and the Politics of Electoral Systems Choice*. New York: Cambridge UP.

Carles Boix. 1999. "Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems," *American Political Science Review*.

Lucas Leeman and Isabela Mares. 2014. "The Adoption of Proportional Representation." *Journal of Politics*. 76(2): 461-478.

Gary Cox, Jon Fiva and Daniel Smith. 2017. "Parties, Legislators and the Origins of Proportional Representation." Working paper, Harvard University.

Torben Iversen and David Soskice. 2006. "Electoral Systems and the Politics of Coalitions," *American Political Science Review*.

### **4. Political Parties and Democratic Stability: New Interpretations**

Daniel Ziblatt. 2017. *Conservative Parties and the Birth of Democracy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

### **5. Institutional (In)Stability in Democracies**

Gretchen Helmke. 2017. *Institutions on the Edge*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

### **6. Pre-Democratic Institutions and Democracy**

Kate Baldwin. 2016. *The Paradox of Traditional Chiefs in Democratic Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

### **7. The Welfare State as an Economic and Political Institution: Two Views**

Gosta Esping-Andersen. 1990. *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, chapter 1-3.

Richard C. Fording, Sanford Schramm, and Joe Soss. 2011. *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*\*\* By week 8, give me a short précis of your final paper topic. This can change, I just want to get you thinking about it.*

## **Autocratic Institutions**

### **8. Colonial Institutions and their Legacies**

Mamood Mamdani. 1996. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton: Princeton UP.

Peter P. Ekeh. 1975. "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol 17, no. 1 (Jan): 91-112.

### **9. Communist Legacies and Mass Politics**

Grigore Pop-Eleches and Joshua A. Tucker. 2017. *Communism's Shadow*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

### **10. Autocratic Institutions: Legislatures**

Rory Truex. 2016. *Making Autocracy Work: Representation and Responsiveness in Modern China*. New York: Cambridge UP.

### **11. Redistribution in Autocracies**

Michael Albertus. 2015. *Autocracy and Redistribution: The Politics of Land Reform*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

## *Markets As Institutions*

### 12. **Capital: Constructing Markets in Credit**

Akos Rona-Tas and Alya Guseva. 2014. *Plastic Money*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press

### 13. **Capital: Markets for Corporate Control**

Pepper Culpepper. 2011. *Quiet Politics and Business Power*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

### 14. **Land: The Politics of Property Rights (Beyond Acemoglu and Robinson...)**

Meg E. Rithmire. 2015. *Land Bargains and Chinese Capitalism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.