

# Political Science Field Survey

SPS Department  
Bocconi University

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

Welcome to Political Science Field Survey. We are glad you are here. This is the first graduate seminar in Political Science. This course provides an in-depth overview of some of the central debates in contemporary political science, and is designed to enable students' active participation. The choice of readings emphasizes recent work, but some more dated classics are included for their importance in defining the direction taken by the literature. The substantive goal is to familiarize students with theoretical arguments and cutting-edge empirical evidence pertaining to central questions in political science. The methodological goal is to help students conduct cutting edge research. Students will develop their familiarity with the research process by: i) formulating sketches of research ideas around each topic covered in class, and ii) preparing a final research proposal on a topic of their choice and presenting it to their peers.

In the class meetings, we will "unpack" each of the readings, put their claims in context, discuss the shortcomings, and explore directions in which the discipline can and should move. By the end of the course, students will be able to "think like a political scientist." Given that a knowledge of political systems at the undergrad level is assumed by most of the readings, students should consult an undergrad comparative politics textbook (e.g., the Clark, Golder and Golder one) if they have specific holes in their knowledge. Needless to say, such a textbook is not a substitute for the assigned readings.

## REQUIRED READINGS

The readings for this class consist largely of book chapters and papers. For each week, students are expected to be able to summarize the main points and describe the methodological approach of any of the assigned pieces. The instructor might also ask a student to defend the argument in a paper, or to discuss its shortcomings: in this case, students do not get to choose whether they

argue in favor or against an argument/paper. Students are also expected to actively contribute to the discussion of the additional readings.

## GRADES AND EVALUATION

Your grade will be based on the following:

- **(20 percent):** Class participation. This is a Ph.D. level seminar: fast-paced and in-depth at the same time. Students are going to be doing most of the talking; the instructor will mostly ask questions to give the discussion some degree of direction. Because of this format, it is essential that every student has completed the assigned reading before class and is ready to participate in discussion. Your active and thoughtful participation is the key to making this seminar a success. Obviously, you should not miss class unless there are exceptional circumstances that keep you from being there.
- **(10 percent):** Sketch of research idea. For some of our classes, you will be invited to submit, ahead of class, 1-2 paragraphs outlining a sketch of a research idea (research question, possible data if empirical, sketch of study approach) inspired by the readings due for class. We think of this as useful training for one of the most important skills as researchers: producing research ideas, with the goal of filling some gap in existing knowledge.
- **(30 percent):** In-class presentations. Each week (starting from week 2) we will feature one or two presentations (with slides) lasting no more than 30 minutes each. The presentation will be timed (exactly like a research seminar) and interrupted after 30 minutes, regardless of whether you have finished making your argument. The presentation should try to find the common thread among the readings for a given week, and will be used as a starter for discussion. In the last session of the course, students will present their research proposals to the class.
- **(40 percent):** Final paper. This should be the first draft of a substantive publishable research paper (i.e., a “conferenceable” paper). Writing a paper like this requires asking a meaningful research question, placing it in the context of the literature, and providing an answer of reasonable quality using either deduction (e.g., a formal model) or evidence (e.g., statistical or historical analysis). Paper topics are to be discussed with the instructor.

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

**November 5 (Invernizzi): Approaches to the study of political institutions; the State; Institution emergence and change.**

### **Background Reading:**

- Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. Chapter 4.

### **Required Readings:**

- Douglass North. 1991. "Institutions." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5: 97-112.
- Adam Przeworski. 2004. "Institutions Matter?" *Government and Opposition* 39: 527-540.
- Olson, Mancur. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *American Political Science Review* 87 (03): 567-576.
- Sánchez De La Sierra, Raul. 2020. "On the Origins of the State: Stationary Bandits and Taxation in Eastern Congo." *Journal of Political Economy* 128 (1).
- North, Douglass C., and Barry R. Weingast. 1989. "Constitutions and Commitment: the Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England." *The Journal of Economic History* 49.4: 803-832.

### **November 8 (Invernizzi): Elections; Electoral competition.**

#### **Background Readings:**

- Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. Chapter 16.
- Gelbach. 2022 *Formal Models of Domestic Politics*. Chapters 1 and 2.
- Steven Tadelis. 2013. *Game Theory: An Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 3.

#### **Required Readings:**

- Huber, John D, and G Bingham Powell. 1994. "Congruence between citizens and policy-makers in two visions of liberal democracy." *World Politics* 46 (3): 291-326.
- Przeworski, Adam. *Why Bother with Elections*. Cambridge: Polity. Part I (chapters 1-4). [Podcast: Will Trump Concede?]
- Calvert, Randall. 1985. "Robustness of the Multidimensional Voting Model: Candidate Motivations, Uncertainty, and Convergence." *American Journal of Political Science*. 29 (1):69-95.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder Jr, and Charles Stewart III. 2001. "Candidate positioning in US House elections." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1):136-159.

### **November 12 (Invernizzi): Accountability**

#### **Background Readings:**

- Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. Chapter 12 (A Unifying Framework).
- Gelbach, *Formal Models of Domestic Politics*, Chapter 7.

**Reading:**

- Fearon, James D. 1999. "Electoral accountability and the control of politicians: selecting good types versus sanctioning poor performance," in *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, edited by Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin, Cambridge University Press, Chapter 2.
- Alt, James, Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, and Shanna Rose. 2011. "Disentangling accountability and competence in elections: Evidence from U.S. term limits." *Journal of Politics* 73(1): 171-186.
- Ferraz, Claudio, and Frederico Finan. 2011. "Electoral Accountability and Corruption: Evidence from the Audits of Local Governments." *American Economic Review* 101 (4): 1274–1311.
- John Huber and Charles Shipan. 2002. *Deliberate Discretion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2 and 4.

**November 19 (Invernizzi): Political Parties; Electoral Systems; Party Systems****Background Readings:**

- Clark, William Roberts, Matt Golder, and Sona Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. Chapter 13, 14.
- John Aldrich. 2011. *Why Parties? A Second Look*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1 and 2 (through page 43).

**Reading:**

- Levy, Gilat. 2004. "A model of political parties." *Journal of Economic Theory*. 115(2): 250-277.
- Invernizzi, Giovanna M. and Federica Izzo. 202X. "Evolving Parties." Working paper.
- De Vries, Catherine E. and Sara B. Hobolt. 2020. *Political Entrepreneurs: The Rise of Challenger Parties in Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Podcast]
- Gary Cox. 1997. *Making Votes Count*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.
- Charles Boix. 1999. "Setting the rules of the game: the choice of electoral systems in advanced democracies." *American Political Science Review* 93: 609-624.
- Carey, John M. and Simon Hix. 2011. "The Electoral Sweet Spot: Low-Magnitude Proportional Electoral Systems." *American Journal of Political Science* 55: 383-397.

**November 22 (Carreri): Bureaucracies and Bureaucratic Politics (Costs and benefits of bureaucratic insulation vs. discretion; Bureaucratic selection - effectiveness, mission, and representative bureaucracy)****Readings:**

- Colonnelli, Emanuele, Edoardo Teso, and Mounu Prem. 2020. "Patronage and Selection in Public Sector Organizations." *American Economic Review* 110(10): 3071-3099.

- Moreira, Diana and Santiago Perez. 2022. "Civil Service Exams and Organizational Performance: Evidence from the Pendleton Act." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 16(3): 250-291.
- Spenkuch, Jorg, Edoardo Teso, and Guo Xu. 2023. "Ideology and Performance in Public Organizations." *Econometrica* 91(4): 1171-1203.
- Akhtari, Mitra, Diana Moreira, and Laura Trucco. 2022. "Political Turnover, Bureaucratic Turnover, and the Quality of Public Services." *American Economic Review* 112(2): 442-493.
- Gailmard, Sean, and John W. Patty. 2007. "Slackers and Zealots: Civil Service, Policy Discretion, and Bureaucratic Expertise." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 873-889.
- Bhavnani and Lee. 2021. "Does Affirmative Action Worsen Bureaucratic Performance? Evidence from the Indian Administrative Service" *American Journal of Political Science* 65(1): 5-20.
- Neggers, Yusuf. 2018. "Enfranchising your own? Experimental evidence on bureaucrat diversity and election bias in India." *American Economic Review* 108(6): 1288-1321.
- Ting, Mike. 2003. "A Strategic Theory of Bureaucratic Redundancy." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(2):274-292.
- Moreira, Diana, and Santiago Perez. 2022. "Who Benefits from Meritocracy?" National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. w30113.

**November 26 (Carreri): Minority Politics; Descriptive Representation; Endogenous Identity Readings:**

- Carnes, Nicholas. 2018. *The Cash Ceiling: Why Only the Rich Run for Office—and What We Can Do About It* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (ch. 1)
- Broockman, David E. "Distorted communication, unequal representation: constituents communicate less to representatives not of their race." *American Journal of Political Science* 58, no. 2 (2014): 307-321.
- Butler, Daniel M., and David E. Broockman. 2011. "Do politicians racially discriminate against constituents? A field experiment on state legislators." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(3): 463-477.
- Goyal, Tanushree. Forthcoming. "Local political representation as a pathway to power: A natural experiment in India." *American Journal of Political Science* .
- Feigenbaum, James, and Andrew B. Hall. 2016. "How High-Income areas Receive More Service from Municipal Government: Evidence from City Administrative Data" Working Paper.
- Sances, Michael W., and Hye Young You. 2017. "Who Pays for Government? Descriptive Representation and Exploitative Revenue Sources." *Journal of Politics* 79(3): 1090-1094.
- Posner, Dan N. 2004. "The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi." *American political science review* 98(4): 529-545.

- Clayton, Amanda. 2021. "How do electoral gender quotas affect policy?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 24(1): 235-252.
- Clayton, Amanda, Diana O'Brien, and Jennifer Piscopo. 2019. "All male panels? Representation and democratic legitimacy." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(1): 113-129.
- Heinze, Alyssa, Brulè, Rachel, and Chauchard, Simon. Forthcoming. "Who Actually Governs? Gender Inequality and Political Representation in Rural India". *Journal of Politics*

**November 29 (Carreri): Local Political Economy** (What's different at the local level? Representation; Pros and cons of local service provision; Interest groups and capture)

**Readings:**

- Tiebout, Charles M. 1956. "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures." *Journal of Political Economy* 64(5): 416-424.
- Peterson, Paul E. *City Limits* (p.3-4; 15-16; 29-38)
- Trounstein, Jessica. "Local political economy: The state of the field: Past, present, and future." *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy* 1(3): 319-340.
- de Benedictis-Kessner, Justin, and Christopher Warshaw. 2016. "Mayoral partisanship and municipal fiscal policy." *Journal of Politics* 78(4): 1124-1138.
- Anzia, Sarah F. 2011. "Election timing and the electoral influence of interest groups." *Journal of Politics* 73(2): 412-427.
- Warshaw, Christopher. 2019. "Local elections and representation in the United States." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22(1): 461-479.
- Hankinson, Michael, and Asya Magazinnik. 2023. "The supply-equity trade-off: The effect of spatial representation on the local housing supply." *The Journal of Politics* 85(3): 1033-1047.
- Cremaschi, Simone, Paula Rett, Marco Cappelluti, and Catherine E. De Vries. Forthcoming. "Geographies of Discontent: Public Service Deprivation and the Rise of the Far Right in Italy." *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Knox, Dean, Will Lowe, and Jonathan Mummolo. 2020. "Administrative records mask racially biased policing." *American Political Science Review* 114(3): 619-637.
- Martinez-Bravo, Monica, Priya Mukherjee, and Andreas Stegmann. 2017. "The non-democratic roots of elite capture: Evidence from Soeharto mayors in Indonesia." *Econometrica* 85(6): 1991-2010.
- Dal Bo, Ernesto, Frederico Finan, Nicholas Y. Li, and Laura Schechter. 2021. "Information technology and government decentralization: Experimental evidence from Paraguay." *Econometrica* 89(2): 677-701.

**December 3 (Carreri): The Role of Politicians (Beyond representation - competence, knowledge, public service motivation)**

**Readings:**

- Putnam, Robert. 1976. *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* The comparative study of political elites. Prentice-Hall. (ch. 1)
- Jones, Benjamin F., and Olken, Ben A. 2005. "Do leaders matter? National leadership and growth since World War II". *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 120(3), 835-864.
- Bloom, Nicholas, and John Van Reenen. 2010. "Why do Management Practices Differ Across Firms and Countries." *Journal of economic perspectives* 24(1): 203-224
- Carreri, Maria. 2021. "Can Good Politicians Compensate for Bad Institutions? Evidence from an Original Survey of Italian Mayors." *Journal of Politics* 83(4): 1229-1245.
- Auerbach, Adam, Shikhar Singh, and Tariq Thachil. Forthcoming. "Who Knows How to Govern? Procedural Knowledge in India's Small Town Councils." *American Political Science Review*.
- Dal Bo, Ernesto, Frederico Finan, Olle Folke, Torsten Persson, and Johanna Rickne. 2017. "Who becomes a politician?." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 132(4): 1877-1914.
- Carreri, Maria, and Julia Payson. 2021. "What Makes a Good Local Leader? Evidence from U.S. Mayors and City Managers." *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy* 2: 199-225.

**December 6 (Carreri and Invernizzi): Presentations**