

AFRICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS (SIS 519-003)
American University, School of International Service

Spring 2010
Location: SIS 203
Thursdays, 5:30 – 8:00 pm
RA: Chelsey Megli (cm3115a@student.american.edu)

Dr. Carl LeVan (levan@american.edu)
<http://carllevan.com>
Office hrs: Tues. 2-5/Thus. 3-5
Asbury room 224B

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces graduate students and advanced undergraduates to the major themes and the basic techniques of comparative institutional analysis. We will critically and empirically examine whether outcomes such as better representation, less corruption, or improved macroeconomic performance can be achieved through institutional design. In order to examine the possibilities and limits of this approach, each class juxtaposes contemporary African research with classic comparative and theoretical studies from other regions of the world.

The course aims to provide holistic view of constitutional design and broad political frameworks, emphasizing the interrelated nature of institutional features. We begin by exploring different definitions and causes of democracy. This includes an examination of the philosophical assumptions behind institutions as an expression of human agency and the role of “informal” institutions. Next, we systematically review the basic features of electoral systems, executive selection, federalism, and party systems. Sessions will include seminal readings on topics such as presidential compared to parliamentary government in the developing world, as well as new research on trends such as mixed-member legislatures and electoral authoritarianism. The final set of readings explores the consequences of institutions, focusing on distributional effects, political stability, and democratic quality. Discussions will center on conceptual themes such as tradeoffs between representativeness and efficiency.

Learning objectives:

- (1) Understand and evaluate the literature on political institutions*
- (2) Develop a holistic view of institutions, situating them within an interrelated architecture of government and appreciating the tradeoffs of different options*
- (3) Apply the concepts and ideas from the course to an original research paper*

The class will be conducted as a seminar, with small teams of students leading discussions for most class meetings. Through this format, students are expected to take responsibility for learning and exercise leadership. The class also utilizes some non-conventional scheduling and an aggressive online learning environment to allow students more time to engage in research and project development. Class discussions will debate topics such as whether political behavior can in fact be shaped by incentives, the impact of historical legacies, and issues related to operationalizing comparative concepts in complex contexts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

E-reserves: Required readings posted on Blackboard are marked with an ***asterisk** below; other required readings noted below are available via the provided Internet link. Please note that additional required materials may be distributed in class or via Blackboard.

Required books, available in the bookstore:

- Basedau, Matthais, Gero Erdmann, and Andreas Mehler. 2007. *Votes, Money and Violence: Political Parties and Elections in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, and South Africa: University of Kwazulu-Natal Press.
- Norris, Pippa. 2008. *Driving Democracy: Do Power-Sharing Institutions Work?* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Posner, Dan. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended books:

- Barkan, Joel. 2009. *Legislative Power in Emerging African Democracies*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner.
- Lijphardt, Arendt. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Assignments:

- Short essay – Write an analytical summary of the readings for two separate class meetings of your choice. Each essay should be 4 – 6 double spaced pages in length not including the works cited page. It should (1) identify the central argument and place it in the literature, (2) explain the relevant concepts in the theoretical readings and outline the evidence in the more empirical works, and (3) offer a critical evaluation of the findings. Then in collaboration with the other students writing on the topic, prepare an outline which is no longer than two single-spaced pages and post it in the appropriate discussion forum on the class wiki site (see below) by 5 pm the night before class.
- Literature review – In preparation for your final paper, write a literature review on a topic which relates to the course themes. Under the “paper topics” thread, post a message on our class wiki by **February 18** which describes your research question and explains your motivations for it. Be prepared to discuss your topic in class. The literature review is due on **March 18** and should be approximately 8 – 10 double spaced pages long, plus bibliography.
- Class participation – For every class meeting with assigned readings, formulate two or three discussion questions and post them on our class wiki in the appropriate discussion thread. *Do not browse, email, IM, etc. during class*. Not only is this distracting and rude, psychologists consistently report that we are all cognitively less capable of “multi-tasking” than we believe to be the case.
- Applied research paper – Your final project should incorporate some original research with primary sources to defend your thesis or to empirically test a hypothesis. The paper is **due on the scheduled final exam date** and should be 15 – 20 pages long, plus bibliography.

About our class wiki: We will use a class wiki instead of Blackboard for most of our online interaction. The class wiki is located at: <http://politicalinstitutions2010.wetpaint.com>. After accepting the invitation sent to the email account associated with your course registration, you will have to create an account with wetpaint.com and you may want to edit your profile. Make sure that your account has “writer” status. I have broken the course material into five “pages” on the left, plus a page for you to post your applied research paper topic. To submit the team outline for the short essay: click on the page associated with your team project, click “easy edit” and insert your team’s outline onto the template page. After doing this, you can create sub-pages

by clicking on your team's main page on the left then clicking "add a new page." For example, if you want to create a whole sub-page dedicated to the discussion of military coups in presidential regimes. To post your weekly class discussion questions, post a "reply" to the appropriate discussion thread.

Early papers are always welcome. Late papers will be penalized. All papers must follow a standard formatting style such as Chicago, APSA or MLA. If you use in-text (Author year, page) citations, you must include a works cited page. If you have questions about format, consult the library's Style Guide: <http://www.library.american.edu/subject/citation.html>. Use one-inch margins, 12-point type, double-spacing, and do not exceed the page limit. For tips on grammar, take a look at *Elements of Style*. Papers will not be accepted by email without prior permission of the instructor. AU's Academic Integrity Code will be strictly enforced. For information, see: <http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/reg80.cfm>.

A passing grade will not be awarded without completion of all course requirements. If you anticipate missing an assignment deadline due to a medical or other emergency, please notify the instructor before the due date. Your course grade will be based on the following calculation: Each analytical summary (20%), literature review (20%), final paper (30%), and class participation including online postings (10%). My grading scale is as follows: 100 to 93 is an A, 92 to 90 is an A-, 89 to 87 is a B+, 86 to 83 is a B, 82 to 80 is a B-, *etc.*

DEMOCRACY AND INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

(1) Introduction (January 14)

Norris, Pippa. Chapter 1, "What Drives Democracy?"

Norris, Pippa. Chapter 3, "Democratic Indicators and Trends"

Norris, Pippa. Chapter 4, "Wealth and Democracy" (skim pp. 90-97)

(2) Imperialism, Identities, and Institutions (January 21)

Posner, Dan. Chapters 1 – 3

* MacLean, Lauren Morris. 2002. "Constructing a Social Safety Net in Africa: An Institutional Analysis of Colonial Rule and State Social Policies in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 37, 3 (Fall 2002): 64-91.

ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

(3) Electoral Systems and Voting (January 28)

Guest discussants: Elizabeth Reiter & Kamissa Camara, Int'l Foundation for Electoral Systems

Norris, Pippa. 2008. Chapter 5, "Electoral Systems" (skim the case studies, pp. 123-131).

* Chang, Eric C., and Miriam Golden. 2006. "Electoral Systems, District Magnitude and Corruption," *British Journal of Political Science* 37:115-37.

* Gibson, Clark C. and James D. Long, "The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Kenya, December 2007," *Electoral Studies* 28 (2009): 497-502.

* Young, Daniel J. 2006. "Is Clientelism at Work in African Elections? A Study of Voting Behavior in Kenya and Zambia," <http://www.afrobarometer.org/papers/AfropaperNo106.pdf>

(4) Electoral Authoritarianism (February 4)

- * Schedler, Andreas. 2006. "The Logic of Electoral Authoritarianism," (pages 1-16 only) in *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- * Edozie, Rita Kiki. 2009. "Electoral Authoritarians and Delegative Democrats: Reconstructing African Democratic Consolidation in Africa." In *Reconstructing the Third Wave of Democracy: Comparative African Democratic Politics*. Lanham: Univ. Press of America.
- Laakso, Liisa. 2007. "Insights into Electoral Violence in Africa," in Basedau, Erdmann, and Mehler.
- * Booyesen, Susan. 2008. "The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Zimbabwe, March and June 2008," *Electoral Studies* 28 (2009): 150-154.

Recommended Readings on Electoral Systems:

- Barkan, Joel, Paul Densham and Gerard Rushton. 2006. "Space Matters: Designing Better Electoral Systems for Emerging Democracies," *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (Oct.): 926-939.
- Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Friedman, Steve. 2004. "South Africa: Building Democracy after Apartheid," in *Democratic Reform in Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Golder, Matt. 2005. "Democratic Electoral Systems around the World, 1946 – 2000," *Electoral Studies* 24 (2005): 103-121.
- Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. 2006. *Electoral System Design: the New International IDEA Handbook*. Free at: <http://www.idea.int/publications/esd/index.cfm#toc>
- Kunicova, J., and Susan Rose-Ackerman. 2005. "Electoral Rules and Constitutional Structure as Constraints on Corruption," *British Journal of Political Science* 35 (2005):573-606.
- Przeworski, Adam, Susan Stokes, and Bernard Manin. 1999. Chapter 1, "Elections and Representation," and Chapter 2, "Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians," in Adam Przeworski, Susan Stokes, and Bernard Manin, eds., *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Cambridge University Press.

EXECUTIVE SELECTION

(5) Presidents and Parliaments: Concepts and Debates (February 11)

- * Linz, Juan J. 1994. "Presidential or Parliamentary Democracy: Does it Make a Difference?" in Juan Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspectives*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- * Mainwaring, Scott, and Matthew Shugart. 1997. "Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America: Rethinking the Terms of the Debate," Chapter 1 in *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, Pippa. Chapter 6, "Presidential and Parliamentary Executives"
- * Cheibub, Antonio. 2007. Chapter 6, "What Makes Presidential Democracies Fragile?" in *Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

(6) Dinner Roundtable Discussion (February 18)

Don't forget to post the description and justification of your research question.

PARTY SYSTEMS

(7) Political Party Development (February 25)

- * Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan. 1967. Chapter 1, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments,” in Lipset, S.M. and S. Rokkan, eds. *Party systems and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives*. New York: Free Press.
- Erdmann, Gero. 2007. “Party Research: Western European Bias and the ‘African Labyrinth’” in Basedau, Erdmann and Mehler, eds.
- * Mozaffar, Shaheen, James Scarritt and Glen Galaich. 2003. “Electoral Systems, Ethnopolitical Cleavages, and Party Systems in Africa’s Emerging Democracies,” *American Journal of Political Science* 97, 3 (August 2003): 379-390.
- Michael, Bratton and Mwangi Kimenyi. 2008. “Voting in Kenya: Putting Ethnicity in Perspective,” AfroBarometer Working Paper No. 95.
<http://www.afrobarometer.org/papers/AfropaperNo95.pdf>

(8) Party Systems after the Third Wave (March 4)

- * Sartori, Giovanni. 1976. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, Chapter 5
- Matthias Basedau. 2007. “Do Party Systems Matter for Democracy: A Comparative Study of 28 Sub-Saharan Countries” in Basedau, Erdmann and Mehler, eds.
- * Rakner, Lise, and Nicolas Van de Walle. 2009. “Democratization by Elections? Opposition Weakness in Africa,” *Journal of Democracy* 20, 3 (2009):108-21.
- * Lindberg, Staffan. 2007. “Institutionalization of Party Systems?” *Government and Opposition* 42, 2 (2007): 215-241.

Recommend Reading on Party Systems:

- Baregu, Mwesiga. 1994. “The Rise and Fall of the One-Party State in Tanzania,” in *Economic change and political liberalization in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Jennifer Widner. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Carey, John and Reynolds, Andrew. 2007. “Parties and Accountable Government in New Democracies,” *Party Politics* Vol.13, No.2 (March 2007).
- Oyugi, Walter. 2006. “Coalition Politics and Coalition Governments in Africa,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 24, 1 (2006): 53 – 79.
- Rakner, Lise; Svåsand, Lars; Khembo, Nixon S. 2007. “Fissions and Fusions, Foes and Friends: Party System Restructuring in Malawi in the 2004 General Elections,” *40 Comparative Political Studies* (2007): 1112-1137.
- Sklar, Richard. 2004. *Nigerian Political Parties Power in an Emergent African Nation*. Trenton, N.J. and Eritrea: Africa World Press, Inc. and Princeton University Press.

→ **Spring Break, No Class (March 11)**

POLITICAL INCLUSION: ISSUES AND ANSWERS

(9) Class meeting in the Social Science Lab, Second Floor of Hurst (March 18)

Norris, Chapter 2, “Evidence and Methods” (use it to think through ideas for your paper)

Examine the code books and tutorials for the Pippa Norris data set at:

<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Data/Data.htm>

(10) Electoral Strategy and Political Coalitions (March 25)

Posner, Dan. Chapters 4, 5, 7 and 8

(11) Federalism and Decentralization (April 1)

Norris, Pippa. 2008. Chapter 7, “Federalism and Decentralization” (skim 179 – 183)

- * Paden, John. 2004. "Unity with Diversity," Chapter 2 in *Crafting the New Nigeria*, Robert Rotberg, ed. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- * Boone, Catherine. 2003. "Decentralization as Political Strategy in West Africa," *Comparative Political Studies*, 36 (2003): 355-380.
- * Smith, Lahra. 2007. "Voting for an Ethnic Identity: Procedural and Institutional Responses to Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 45 (2007): 565 – 594.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

(12) The Resource Curse (April 8)

- * Robinson, James, et al. 2006. "Political Foundations of the Resource Curse," *Journal of Development Economics* 79 (April 2006): 447 – 468.
- * Akinola, Shittu R. 2008. "Coping With Social Deprivation through Self-Governing Institutions in Oil Communities of Nigeria," *Africa Today* 54, 5 (Fall 2008): 89-107
- * Shaxson, Nicholas. 2007. "Oil, Corruption, and the Resource Curse," *International Affairs* 83 (Nov. 2007): 1123 – 1140.
- * Pegg, Scott. 2005. "Can Policy Intervention Beat the Resource Curse?" *African Affairs* 105 (Dec. 2005): 1-25.

(13) Political Institutions and Economic Performance (April 15)

- * Shugart, Matthew Soberg. 1999. "Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, and the Provision of Collective Goods in Less-Developed Countries," *Constitutional Political Economy* 10 (1999): 53-88.
 - * van de Walle, Nicolas. 2003. "Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41 (2):297-321.
 - * Arriola, Leonardo. 2009. "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa," *Comparative Political Studies* 42, 10 (2009): 1339 – 62.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E. 2007. "Political Parties, Elections and Patronage," in Basedau, Erdmann, and Mehler.

(14) Discussion of final projects (April 22)

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods.

Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/ college-specific information.