

## **PS9120: Voting and Elections**

Professor Jay Dow

407b Jesse Hall

Seminar: Monday 3:00 – 5:30.

OH: By appointment and via Zoom.

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### **Seminar Overview**

This seminar introduces students to literatures that focus on the place of elections in democratic governance. Specifically, we study electoral institutions and processes. Here we discuss what one might reasonably expect of electoral institutions and how these expectations relate to normative democratic values.

The seminar is divided into four sections. The first places elections in the context of democratic theory. It also introduces principles of social choice theory for the purpose of understanding the extent to which voting methods aggregate individual preferences into meaningful collective choices. The second section considers the rules of the democratic game – that is, the legal and institutional framework in which elections are contested. Here we focus on three topics. The first is franchise. The second is the development of political parties. Last, we discuss the casting of ballots. The seminar's third section reviews the electoral system itself. This is the set of rules that translate votes into legislative seats. Keeping with our focus on the Anglo-American tradition we place particular emphasis on single-member district elections. Here we discuss the relationship between electoral system and the distribution of legislative seats among political parties. We also discuss apportionment and districting. Finally, section four focuses on representation and political accountability. We conclude by evaluating electoral system performance and arguments for and against reform in the US and the UK.

The readings are organized in a manner designed to develop a sustained argument about the linkage between the normative values and the attainment of these values through elections. The argument is that there is no single best, or optimal, electoral regime that implements these values. The implementation of any electoral arrangement that is 'democratic' by accepted definitions necessarily requires a tradeoff in some normative standards or goals to achieve others. We seek to understand the theoretical underpinnings of electoral democracy, and the assets and liabilities of different electoral arrangements.

The seminar is designed for graduate students in political science and history. It is a core element of the joint Kinder Institute hosted MA in Atlantic Studies. Accordingly, we place considerable emphasis on the trans-Atlantic development of modern electoral democracy. However, it also emphasizes foundational material for PhD level students with interests in electoral institutions and processes.

## Grades

Your grade will be determined by seminar participation (50%) and four essay assignments. 4@12.5%). The essays will be relatively brief writing assignments (approximately seven pages) that ask you to address questions from each of the seminar's sections. **The essay questions will be distributed on 9/21, 10/19, 11/16, 12/7 and due the following week.**

This is a graduate seminar in which grading is predicated on my subjective assessment of your discussion contributions and written works. Consequently, I use the following, graduate-level, grading scale.

**A+** Excellent contributions on all dimensions. Students assigned this mark will be regular, insightful contributors to seminar discussions, return highly polished essays, and demonstrate command of the readings commensurate with a seminar awarding PhD credit.

**A** Very good contributions on all dimensions. Students assigned this mark will be regular, insightful, contributors to seminar discussions, return polished essays, and demonstrate command of the readings commensurate with a seminar awarding PhD credit.

**A-** Solid contributions on all dimensions. Students assigned this mark will be astute contributors to seminar discussions, return well-written essays, and demonstrate command of the readings commensurate with a seminar awarding PhD credit.

**B+** Regular contributions on most dimensions. Students assigned this mark will make meaningful contributions to seminar discussions, return well-written essays, and demonstrate command of the readings commensurate with a seminar awarding graduate credit.

**B** Regular contributions on most dimensions. Students assigned this mark will make contributions to seminar discussions, return well-written essays, and demonstrate command of the readings commensurate with a seminar awarding graduate credit.

**B-** Episodic contributions on most dimensions. Students assigned this mark will make contributions to seminar discussions, return essays, and demonstrate solid familiarity with the readings commensurate with a seminar awarding graduate credit.

**C – F.** Marks in this range denote marginal to unsatisfactory performance in a graduate seminar.

## **Covid Related Information**

### **General Seminar Procedures**

- If you are experiencing any COVID-related symptoms, or are otherwise feeling unwell, do not attend in-person classes and contact your health care provider and/or student health immediately. COVID symptoms include: fever greater than 100.4 or chills; cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; unexplained muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea.
- We will all wear face coverings while in the classroom, unless you have a documented exemption due to a disability or medical condition.
- We will maintain a 6-foot distance from each other at all times (except in specific lab/studio courses with other specific guidelines for social distancing).
- We will enter the classroom and fill the room starting at the front, filing all the way across a row. When class ends, we will exit the row nearest to the door first; the instructor or TA will give the signal for the next row to exit, in the same manner.

### **Attendance**

Flexible Attendance. If you cannot attend seminar due to illness or medical concerns, I will make arrangements for you to make up missed material. Likewise, if I cannot attend seminar for medical reasons, I will provide a make-up seminar or some other vehicle to cover any missed material. All of the readings are available in required books, electronically through the library, and on canvas.

### **Accommodation Plan**

If you cannot attend seminar in person, I will make arrangements for you to continue participating in the seminar via zoom.

### **Pivot Plan**

If MU cancels in-person classes, we will move to a synchronous zoom format.

### **Alternate Instructor for Canvas Access**

If I become, um, incapacitated this semester, Jacob Owen has access to the seminar canvas page.

### **Entrance and Exit from Seminar Room**

To protect your health and my health, I will be the last to enter our seminar room and the last to exit it. At the conclusion of seminar, please leave in an orderly fashion by rows – nearest to the door to farthest from door. I will be unable to engage in post-seminar conversation.

## **Other Notices**

### **ADA**

Please inform me if you have needs addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and need assistance with examinations or other course requirements. You should also notify the Disability Services office regarding ADA considerations relevant to your performance in this class. I will make a reasonable effort to accommodate your needs.

### **Intellectual Pluralism**

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions concerning the quality of instruction in this class may address concerns to either the Departmental Chair or Divisional leader or Director of the [Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities](http://osrr.missouri.edu/) (<http://osrr.missouri.edu/>). All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed and presented. Any effort to gain advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. Please contact me if you are in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, inappropriate paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration. All papers in this class must be completed independently.

## Readings

**Read not to contradict and confute, not to believe and take for granted...but to weigh and consider.**

### Sir Francis Bacon

This seminar builds on books and articles. These include classical contributions and more recent scholarship. Our goal is to slowly and carefully read extended arguments most central to the seminar, not race through a survey of literature. For this reason, I also limit my list of recommended readings (provided in seminar) to a few gems.

For this seminar I only require that you purchase Alexander Keyssar. *The Right to Vote* And Hanna F. Pitken *The Concept of Representation* and Alexis de Tocqueville *Democracy in America* (Harvey C. Mansfield edition). All other readings are available on the seminar canvas page or electronically through the MU Libraries. However, these copies are of uneven quality. If you have sustained interests in democratic theory, political development and elections, or have difficulty reading the on-line materials, I recommend you purchase Richard Katz *Democracy and Elections*, John Locke. *Second Treatise on Government*, John H. Aldrich *Why Parties?*, Edmund S. Morgan *Inventing the People*, J.R. Pole *Political Representation in England & the Origins of the American Republic*, Lewis Hartz *The Liberal Tradition in America*, William Riker *Liberalism Against Populism*, Anthony Downs *An Economic Theory of Democracy* and Richard F. Biesel *The American Ballot Box in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Some of these selections are out of print, but used copies may be found at the usual on-line retailers.

The syllabus is not a contract. I may make changes to the readings during the semester.

## Seminar Outline

### Part I: Elections, Democratic Theory and Political Culture

#### August 24<sup>th</sup>: Seminar Introduction

#### August 31<sup>st</sup>: Elections and Democratic Theory

Richard Katz *Democracy and Elections* Chs.1-2, 7-8  
John Locke. *Second Treatise on Government*, Chs. 8&13.

#### September 7<sup>th</sup>: No Seminar. Labor Day

#### September 14<sup>th</sup>: The Origins of Popular Sovereignty and Electoral Democracy in the UK and US.

Edmund S. Morgan *Inventing the People*. Chs. 3-4,10-11.  
J.R. Pole *Political Representation in England & the Origins of the American Republic*  
Part I, Ch. 1; Part 2, Chs. 4-5; Part 3, Chs. 3, 10; Part 4, Ch. 4; Part 5, pp. 526-539.

## **September 21<sup>st</sup>: American Political Culture & Institutions**

Federalist Papers 10, 39 & 57

Federal Farmer Letter 7

Alexis de Tocqueville *Democracy in America* Chs. Part 1, Chs. 3-4, pp.124-128; Part 2, Chs. 5-8

Lewis Hartz *The Liberal Tradition in America* (selections)

Rogers M. Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," *American Political Science Review* 87 (3) (September 1993): 549-566.

Robert C. Lieberman "Ideas, Institutions, and Political Order: Explaining Political Change" *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 96, No. 4 (Dec., 2002), pp. 697-712

## **September 28<sup>th</sup>: Social Choice Theory and Electoral Democracy (Zoom Seminar)**

William Riker *Liberalism Against Populism* (Chs. 1-5)

Anthony Downs *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (Chs. 1-2, 8)

In Riker please pay particular attention to sections on Criteria for Judging Voting Methods (4H, 4I, 4J) and Arrow's Theorem (Ch. 5).

## **Part II. Franchise and the Development of Political Parties**

### **October 5<sup>th</sup>: The Early United States and The First British Reforms**

Chilton Williamson *American Suffrage from Property to Democracy 1760-1860*. Chs. 4-10

"The History of Parliamentary Franchise" House of Commons Library Research Paper 13/14 pp. 1-30

### **October 12<sup>th</sup>. The United States and Great Britain: Franchise Mid 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries**

Alexander Keyssar. *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*. Chs. 4-9

"The History of Parliamentary Franchise" House of Commons Library Research Paper 13/14 pp. 30-60

Please read case syllabi and listen to oral arguments for the following at <https://www.oyez.org/>

*Shelby County v. Holder* 570 U.S. 2 (2013) and 2/27/2013 oral arguments at <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2012/12-96>

## October 19<sup>th</sup>. The Development of Political Parties – The US and the UK

John F. Hoadley *Origins of American Political Parties: 1789-1803*. Chs. 1-3

John Aldrich. *Why Parties?* Chs. 1-4

Gary W. Cox. *The Efficient Secret*. Chs. 1-2, 6-7, 9-10.

## October 26<sup>th</sup>. Casting Ballots

Robert J. Dinkin *Voting in Revolutionary America*. Ch. 6.

Richard F. Biesel *The American Ballot Box in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. Chs. 1-2.

Joseph Anthony and David Kimball “Implementing Voter ID: Lessons from Missouri USA” *Policy Studies* (2019)

Martha Kropf, *Institutions and the Right to Vote in America*. (selections)

Please view the following George Caleb Bingham Paintings at the St. Louis Art Museum (on-line)

*Stump Speaking* (<https://www.slam.org/collection/objects/29774/>)

*The County Election* (<https://www.slam.org/collection/objects/29775/>)

*The Verdict of the People* (<https://www.slam.org/collection/objects/29776/>)

### Part III. Electoral System and Processes

#### November 2<sup>nd</sup>: SMD Electoral Systems – Seat/Vote Translations and Duverger’s Law.

Edward R. Tufte. 1973. “The Relationship Between Seats and Votes in a Two Party System” *American Political Science Review*. 67:540-554.

Jay Dow. *Electing the House*. Ch. 8.

Jonathan P. Kastellec, Andrew Gelman and Jamie P. Chandler. 2008. “Predicting and Dissecting the Seats-Votes Curve in the 2006 U.S. House Election.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 41:139–45

Octavio Amorim Neto and Gary W. Cox. 1997. “Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures and the Number of Parties. *American Journal of Political Science*. 41:149-174.

William H. Riker. 1982. “The Two-Party System and Duverger’s Law: An Essay in the History of Political Science” *American Political Science Review*. 76:753-766.

#### November 9<sup>th</sup>: Vote Value, Districting and Gerrymandering

Raymond La Raja. 2009. Redistricting: Reading Between the Lines. *Annual Review of Political Science*. 12:203-23.

Gary W. Cox and Jonathan N. Katz. 2002. *Elbridge Gerry’s Salamander* Ch. 2. “The Reapportionment Revolution”

Vann R. Newkirk II “How Redistricting Became a Technological Arms Race” *The Atlantic* October 28, 2017.

Please read case syllabi for the following at <https://www.oyez.org/>. Also, please listen to *first* oral argument in *Baker v. Carr*, the oral argument in *Shaw v. Reno*, and the oral argument in *Rucho v. Common Cause*. In addition, please read the court opinion and the dissenting opinion in *Rucho*.

*Baker v. Carr*, 369 U.S. 186 (1962)

*Reynolds v. Sims*, 377 U.S. 533 (1964)

*Wesberry v. Sanders* 376 U.S. 1 (1964)

*Thornburg v. Gingles*, 487 U.S. 30 (1986)

*Shaw v. Reno*, 509 U.S. 630 (1993)

*Rucho v. Common Cause* No. 18-422, 588 U.S. \_\_\_\_ (2019)

## **Part IV. Representation**

### **November 16<sup>th</sup>: Political Thought and Representation**

Hanna F. Pitken *The Concept of Representation*

### **November 23<sup>rd</sup>. No Seminar. Thanksgiving Break**

### **November 30<sup>th</sup>: : Electoral Institutions and Representation**

Lani Guinier. "The Representation of Minority Interests: The Question of Single-Member Districts." 14 *Cardozo L. Rev.* 1135 (1992 - 1993)

Nancy Schwartz *The Blue Guitar* Ch. 1

Matt Golder and Jacek Stramski. 2010. "Ideological Congruence and Electoral Institutions" *American Journal of Political Science.* 54:90-106.

G. Bingham Powell. 2006. "Election Laws and Representative Government: Beyond Votes and Seats" *British Journal of Political Science.* 36:365-95.

Lawrence Ezrow. 2008. "Parties' Policy Programmes and the Dog That Didn't Bark: No Evidence that Proportional Systems Promote Extreme Party Positioning." *British Journal of Political Science.* 38:479-497.

Jay K. Dow 2011. "Party System Extremism in Majoritarian and Proportional Electoral Systems" *British Journal of Political Science* 41:341-361.

### **December 7<sup>th</sup>. Reflections and Discussion**

No Readings