



Department of Political Studies  
**Comparative Politics: Questions & Challenges**  
**Electoral Systems— POLS 406**  
**Fall 2013**

<u>Instructor:</u>	Jonathan.rose@queensu.ca <a href="http://jonathanrose.ca">http://jonathanrose.ca</a>
<u>Course web page:</u>	See Moodle Course POLS 406
<u>Class Time</u>	Chernoff 211 Wednesday 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM
<u>Office Hours</u>	Mac-Corry C 330  By appointment (613) 533.6225 Check webpage for most current office hours

Academic integrity comprises the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see [www.academicintegrity.org](http://www.academicintegrity.org)). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the “freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas” essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities). Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar: see Academic Regulation 1 (<http://bit.ly/1dQntNE>) and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen’s. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

Students are advised that incomplete standing will be granted only with the permission of the chair of undergraduate or graduate studies (as appropriate) and only where there is a clear demonstration of need. Applications for “Incomplete” standing must be made in the first instance to the instructor on the form available in the General Office. The simple fact of non-submission of work does not constitute an application and will result in a grade of zero for that assignment.

Students who feel that there are reasons to have their grades reviewed should follow the steps set out in the Faculty of Arts and Science’s Regulation 11, “Review of Grades and Examinations” (<http://bit.ly/1ajlcb4>).

The material in this course outline and the accompanying POLS 406 topic outline is copyrighted and is for the sole use of students registered in POLS 406. This material shall not be distributed or disseminated to anyone other than students registered in POLS 406. Failure to abide by these conditions is a breach of copyright, and may also constitute a breach of academic integrity under the University Senate’s Academic Integrity Policy Statement. So, just don’t do it.

**Copyright of Course Materials**

This material is copyrighted and is for the sole use of students registered in POLS 406. This material shall not be distributed or disseminated to anyone other than students registered in POLS 406. Failure to abide by these conditions is a breach of copyright, and may also constitute a breach of academic integrity under the University Senate’s Academic Integrity Policy Statement.

Grading Scheme:

Some components of this course will receive letter grades which, for purposes of calculating your course average, will be translated into numerical equivalents using the Faculty of Arts and Science approved scale:

**Arts & Science Letter Grade Input Scheme**

<b>Assignment mark</b>	<b>Numerical value for calculation of final mark</b>
A+	93
A	87
A-	82
B+	78
B	75
B-	72
C+	68
C	65
C-	62
D+	58
D	55
D-	52
F48 (F+)	48
F24 (F)	24
F0 (0)	0

Your course average will then be converted to a final letter grade according to Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale:

**Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Numerical Course Average (Range)</b>
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	49 and below

Electoral systems are on one level simple institutions: they are the means by which votes are transferred into seats. On another level, they are enormously complex and varied. They can be understood by their constituent elements and how those vary or they can be understood by the kinds of electoral outcomes they produce. Others have sought to understand them as dependent on party systems or political culture. But some have suggested that party systems are a product of electoral systems. One thing that is evident from their study is that the myriad variations of electoral systems tell us about different democratic values and ideals.

This course has two broad aims. First, it is an introduction to the four families of electoral systems and their variations and second it seeks to examine the consequences of electoral systems.

POLS 393 and POLS 421 are exclusions to this course. If you have taken either of these courses you cannot take POLS 406 this year.

### *Course objectives:*

#### 1. Knowledge Objectives:

Students will have a solid understanding of the different families of electoral systems. They will know what the constituent elements of an electoral system is and how varying them changes the outcomes. Students will also be exposed to an in-depth study of specific countries and the evolution of their electoral systems.

#### 2. Skills Objectives:

Students will have the opportunity to develop oral skills, participate in group work and contribute to a collective, critical understanding of readings. Active participation will be encouraged throughout the course.

### *Evaluation:*

We will discuss the precise breakdown of these on the first day of class but Students will be graded on:

- 10 page research essay (worth 30%) (or presentation 10% + 20% paper),
- 4 one page (single spaced) peer reviews of readings done through Moodle (worth 25%)\*
- iClicker participation worth (worth 5%)\*\*
- final exam (worth 40%)

\*students will be evaluated by a) submission of four one page reviews of a course reading; b) evaluating twelve papers over the course of the term. There will be more details in class.

\*\*The 5% 'Clicker' participation will be based on how frequently you participate in class polls.

If for the term you have a  
 90-100% response rate = 100%  
 80-90% response rate = 80%  
 60-80% response rate = 70%  
 50-60% response rate = 55%  
 lower than 50% = 0%

Please note that your grades for clicker participation will not be based on correct answers merely participation.

The essay will have three due dates. Students can submit their essay in class on

October 23: and receive comments and bonus of one partial letter grade (i.e, B- to B; C+ to B-; A to A+)

November 13: and receive comments and no bonus

November 27: and receive no comments and no bonus (i.e., just graded)

There is also an opportunity, depending on class interest, to make presentations on your proposed essay topic or the strengths and weaknesses of a particular electoral system. We will discuss this on the first day of class as well.

### *Materials required:*

David M. Farrell, *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). Available at the Campus bookstore and used at UBS.

iClicker remote.

Other books, posted on the Moodle course website that we will use include:

*Electoral System Design: the New IDEA Handbook*. Stockholm: International IDEA (available on-line)

*Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada*. Law Commission of Canada, 2004 (available on-line)

In addition students should familiarize themselves with *Electoral Studies* available in the library and through the library's e-journals collection. Consult the course web page for other electronic resources.

### *Class Format:*

Each 3 hour class will be divided into two classes where we will focus on the core concept in the first half and have a discussion around questions relating to the system under discussion.

After Thanksgiving we will turn our attention to the consequences of electoral systems and the motivations and manifestations of reform around the world. The course will conclude with the class being divided up into groups and each group making a case to a jury of peers for a particular electoral system.

*September 11**Outline and Introduction**What is an Electoral System and what does it do?*

David Farrell, *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction*, Chapter 1 (hereafter referred to as Farrell)

*September 18**The Elements of Electoral Systems: District Magnitude, Formula and Ballot Structure*

André Blais and Louis Massicotte, "Electoral Systems" in Lawrence Leduc, Richard Niemi and Pippa Norris [eds.], *Comparing Democracies 2: New Challenges in the Study of Elections and Voting* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), 40–69.

André Blais and Louis Massicotte, "Electoral formulas: a macroscopic perspective" *European Journal of Political Research* 32 (August 1997), 107–129.

*The Elements of Systems as Democratic Values*

New Zealand Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System. Available on the Elections New Zealand web page or here:

<http://www.elections.org.nz/voting/mmp/royal-commission-report-1986.html>

Richard Katz, "Democratic Principles and Judging 'Free and Fair'" in *Representation* 41:3, (2005) 161–79. Available through e-journals.

IDEA, *Electoral System Design, The New International IDEA Handbook*, "Criteria for Design", 9–15 (hereafter called the *IDEA Handbook*). Available on-line.

*September 25**1. The Families of Electoral Systems: Single Member Plurality (SMP)*

Farrell, Chapter 2

*Variations on Plurality: The Block Vote, Limited Vote and Cumulative Vote*

Arend Lijphart, Rafael Pintor & Yasunori Sone, "the Limited Vote and the Single Nontransferable Vote: Lessons from the Japanese and Spanish Examples" in Bernard Grofman & Arend Lijphart [eds.], *Electoral Laws and their Political Consequences* (New York: Agathon Press, 1986).

*October 2*

*2. The Families of Electoral Systems: Majoritarian Systems*

Farrell, Chapter 3

*3. The Families of Electoral Systems: Proportional Representation (List PR) and Single Transferable Vote (STV)*

Farrell, Chapters 4 and 6

*October 9*

*Case Study of List PR systems and STV*

Read any chapter in Part IV (Closed List Systems) or V (Preferential List System) as well as Michael Gallagher, "Ireland: The Discreet Charm of PR-STV" in Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell [eds.], *The Politics of Electoral Systems* (New York: Oxford, 2008),

*Assessing the Two Round System and Alternative Vote systems*

*October 16*

*4. The Families of Electoral Systems: Mixed Systems*

Farrell, Chapter 5

Matthew Søberg Shugart and Martin P. Wattenberg, "Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: A Definition and Typology" in Shugart & Wattenberg [eds], *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?* (New York: Oxford, 2005), 9-25

*Case Study of Mixed systems – Parallel and Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)*

David Denemark, "Choosing MMP in New Zealand: Explaining the 1993 Electoral Reform" in Shugart & Wattenberg, 70-96.

Steven Reed and Michael F. Thies, "The Causes of Electoral Reform in Japan" in Shugart & Wattenberg, 152-173.

*October 23*

*Electoral Reform in Canada: Nature of Reforms*

Patrick Dunleavy and Helen Margetts, "Understanding the Dynamics of Electoral Reform," *International Political Science Review* (1995), 16:1.

*IDEA Handbook*, "The Process of Change" 15-25.

*Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada.* Law Commission of Canada, 2004.  
Available from Instructor

Richard S. Katz, "Why are there so Many (or so Few) Electoral Reforms?" in Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell [eds.], *The Politics of Electoral Systems* (New York: Oxford, 2008), 57–79

### *Electoral Reform in the UK*

*UK Voting Systems: The Experience of New Voting Systems in the UK Since 1997,* Governance of Britain. Ministry of Justice 2008. Available electronically from course web site or <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/voting-systems-review.htm>

### *October 30*

#### *Electoral Reform in Eastern Europe: The Persistence of Mixed Systems*

Sarah Birch, Electoral systems and political transformation in post-communist Europe (London: Palgrave, 2003), chapter 1 & 2.

Kenneth Benoit, "Models of Electoral System Change" *Electoral Studies* 23 (2004) 363–389.

Žilvinas Martinaitis, "Explaining Electoral Reforms in Lithuania", *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 43:3 (September 2012), 389–400.

#### *Consequences of Electoral Systems*

Farrell, Chapter 7

Arend Lijphart, *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies, 1945–1990* (New York: Oxford, 1994), chapter 4 "Changes in Election Rules Between Systems in the Same Country", 78–94.

André Blais & Peter Loewen, "The French Electoral System and Its Effects," *West European Politics*, 32, 2 (March 2009)

### *November 6*

#### *Electoral Systems and the Party System*

Rein Taagpera and Bernard Grofman, "Rethinking Duverger's Law: Predicting the Effective Number of Parties in Plurality and PR Systems – Parties Minus Issues Equals One" *European Journal of Political Research* 13:4 (2006), 341–52.

André Blais, R.K. Carty, "The Psychological Impact of Electoral Laws: Measuring Duverger's Elusive Factor" *British Journal of Political Science* 21:1 (1991), 79–93

Giovanni Sartori, "The Party Effects of Electoral Systems," *Israel Affairs* 6 (1999), 13–28

### *Electoral Systems and Representation*

Pippa Norris, "The Impact of Electoral Reform on Women's Representation" *Acta Politica* 41:2 (2006), 197–213.

Wilma Rule, "Women's Under-representation and Electoral Systems" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 27(4), 689–92.

Rein Taagepera, "How Electoral Systems Matter for Democratization", *Democratization* 5(3), 68–91

### *November 13*

#### *Do Electoral Systems Affect What Governments Do?*

Frank Thames & Martin Edwards, "Differentiating Mixed-Member Electoral Systems Mixed-Member Majoritarian and Mixed-Member Proportional Systems and Government Expenditures" *Comparative Political Studies* 39:7 (2006), 905–27.

Karen Long Jusko, "Electoral Politics and Poverty Relief: How Changing Electoral Incentives Can Help the Poor" (Working Paper: University of Michigan 2006). Copy available from me.

#### *Electoral Systems and Turnout*

André Blais and Kees Aarts, "Electoral Systems and Turnout" *Acta Politica* 41(2), 180–96.

Jeffrey Karp and Susan Banducci, "Political efficacy and participation in twenty-seven democracies: how electoral systems shape political behaviour" *British Journal of Political Science* 38:2 (2008), 311–34.

### *November 20*

On November 23 we will break into seven groups (MMP, Parallel, STV, List PR, Alternative Vote, SMP and a 'jury of peers'). The following class each group will first outline the elements of their system and make a case why their system is the best electoral system. In that class, each group will make an oral presentation of 5 minutes to a 'jury of peers' who will ask 5 minutes of questions to each group about the claims they made.

The 'jury of peers' will then select the most persuasive presentation and provide a rationale for its choice. Using the iclickers we will see how the jury's vote corresponds to the vote of the class. ☞Note: Attendance will be taken on these two classes. Each class missed will result in a 2% deduction of your final grade. Missing both will result in a 4% deduction of your final grade. ☹



*November 27*

*So, Which is the Best Electoral System?*

Maurice Duverger, 1984. "Which is the best electoral system?" in A. Lijphart and B. Grofman [eds.] *Choosing an Electoral System: Issues and Alternatives*. New York: Praeger

Shaun Bowler, David Farrell and Robin Pettitt. 2005. 'Expert Opinion on Electoral Systems: So which Electoral system is 'best'?' *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 15:1, 3–19

Pippa Norris, "Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed Systems" *International Political Science Review* (1997) 18:3, 297–312