



Department of Political Studies  
**Introduction to Electoral Systems— POLS 391**  
**Fall 2018**

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<u>Course web page:</u>	See OnQ for extra readings
<u>Class Time</u>	Mac Corry D 201 Monday 8:30 to 10 AM and Thursday 10 to 11:30 AM
<u>Office Hours</u>	Mon 11–noon; Tues. 10:30–noon; Wed. 1–2 Mac–Corry C 330 <a href="http://jonathanrose.ca/contact/">http://jonathanrose.ca/contact/</a> By appointment (613) 533.6225

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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 (on the left). Your course average will then be converted to a final letter grade according to Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale (on the right)

**Arts & Science Letter Grade Input Scheme**

Assignment mark	Numerical value for calculation of final mark
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

**Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale**

Grade	Numerical Course Average (Range)
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

**Accommodations:** Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Wellness Services (SWS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the Student Wellness website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/>

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.

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.

Intended Student Learning Outcomes:

To complete this course students will demonstrate their ability to:

1. identify and describe four broad families of electoral systems;
2. understand the tradeoffs inherent in each electoral system;
3. be able to understand the *mechanics* of electoral systems including ballot structure, district magnitude and formula;
4. be able to understand the *effects* of electoral systems;
5. apply values to determine the “ideal” electoral system.

Evaluation

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

- 6 page single spaced report to a government on the ideal electoral system or 10 page double spaced research essay (worth 30%),
- 4 one page (single spaced) peer reviews of readings done through Aropa via OnQ (worth 30%)\*
- 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 (‘peer review’). If peer review is not completed, grades for your one page review will not be given.

One page review must be submitted to Aropa (via onQ). No later than 4 PM	Completion of three peer reviews. No later than 4 PM
Monday, September 24	Friday, September 28
Monday, October 1	Friday, October 5
Monday, October 15	Friday, October 19
Monday, October 29	Friday, November 2
Monday, November 12	Friday, November 16

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

December 4: and receive no comments and no bonus (i.e., just graded)

### Materials required:

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

Other materials will be posted in OnQ 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.

### Class Format:

Each week on Monday class will be comprised of a traditional lecture that will complement the readings. On Thursday's class, we will use this class as an active classroom where, in groups at the tables, students will work on material from the lecture. This can be in the form of producing something or solving a problem or applying formulae to see how electoral systems change.

### September 6

#### Outline and Introduction

### September 10 & 13

#### What is an Electoral System and what does it do?

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

*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.

*September 17 & 20*

*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.

*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).

*September 24 & 27*

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

Farrell, Chapter 3

*October 1 & 4 and 11 (no class Oct 8)*

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

Farrell, Chapters 4 and 6

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),

October 15 & 18 & 22 (no class Oct 25)

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 29 & November 1:

Electoral Reform in Canada: Nature of Reforms

Andrew Potter, Daniel Weinstock and Peter Loewen, *Should we Change How we Vote?* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), Introduction, "The History and Politics of electoral reform"

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 in OnQ

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

November 5 & 8:Electoral Reform in the UK & Abroad

*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>

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.

November 12 & 15 :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 19 & 22: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

November 19: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 22:

#### 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.

### November 26 & 29

#### 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.

#### 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