This course is not a field survey of comparative politics. Rather, it is designed to build an appreciation of what makes for high quality research and writing in this field. The course draws on the politics of representative government in industrialized democracies, but its core focus is on general political processes not politics in specific countries. The aim is to develop analytical skills and instincts that can be applied to a diverse range of political problems. By the end of the course, students should have a better feel for the “comparative method”, which transcends any substantive topic. We set out to achieve these objectives by going deeply into a small number of core topics in comparative politics, and concern the “cycle of representation” sketched below.

A lot has been written on these matters. We are obviously interested in substantive conclusions emerging from this work, but are much more interested in how these conclusions are derived in a way that is rigorous enough to command serious intellectual attention.

Each topic has associated readings, intended as a “start-up” resource to get students into the relevant literature. Students will pick three starred papers from these readings write a referee report of 2-3 pages on each, exactly as if acting as a referee for a top professional journal. We will typically discuss 3 of these papers and their referee reports each week. Prior to each class all students should at a minimum read, and be prepared to comment on, all papers to be discussed.
TERM PAPER AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO FINAL GRADE

The final course grade will be based on the referee reports on articles (30%), plus a paper proposal (20%) and final draft paper (50%). Treat the draft paper as the draft of a conference paper ultimately destined for publication in a professional journal. Set yourself the highest standards and find a topic on which you are prepared to make a substantial investment of time, effort and creative energy. This should also be a topic that can be developed within the context of comparative political analysis, but there are few important questions in political science for which this is not true.

Selecting a precise, relevant, challenging, yet feasible, substantive question is one of the most difficult jobs facing any member of the academy. Start thinking about this immediately, guided by your own substantive interests, intuitions and background knowledge as well as particular talents that you yourself can bring to bear on the work, all of which you should exploit to the full. Most important questions crystallize as you read the work of others with a critical eye, always looking for theoretical and empirical weakness, always alert to ways in which arguments could be better constructed, or empirical evidence better collected, marshaled and analyzed.

Your paper should have the following structure:

1. **Motivate your question.** State your question and justify its substantive importance.
2. **Set your question in context.** Outline and evaluate relevant work, especially theoretical models, currently available in the literature.
3. **Develop your *a priori* theoretical expectations.** In light of 2 above, specify your own theoretical approach and use this to develop precise empirical expectations that bear directly on your question.
4. **Review available empirical evidence.** Take your precise empirical expectations to the data. If no suitable data are available, specify a feasible research project that would gather the required evidence.
5. **Draw clear inferences** about what your empirical analysis in 4 tells you about your empirical expectations in 3, and thus about the question you pose in 1.
6. **Conclude and map out the way forward.** No interesting question is ever answered conclusively. Knowing what you now know, what are the next steps needed in search of a better answer?

As a discipline to your own writing at this stage, make sure that you paper has six main subheadings, one dealing with each of the six matters listed above.

The final paper is due 16 December 2011. A title and 750 word outline of the paper is due 11 October 2011, following the Columbus Day weekend. The outline should do the following:

a. Motivate your question, as in 1 above.

b. Outline your answers to 2-4 above.

**It is crucial to hit deadlines for both the paper proposal and the final paper. There will be a grade penalty for late work, so factor these dates into your schedule.**
1: Introduction, discussion and allocation of tasks

MAKING AND BREAKING GOVERNMENTS

2: Government formation: “types” of government
*(Volden and Carrubba 2004)
*(Martin and Stevenson 2010)
*(Golder 2010)
(Strom 1990)
(Laver and Shepsle 1996)
(Martin and Stevenson 2001)

3: Government formation as legislative bargaining
*(Diermeier and Merlo 2004)
*(Ansolabehere et al. 2005)
*(Bäck and Dumont 2008)
(Baron and Ferejohn 1989)
(Baron 1991)
(Snyder et al. 2005)

4: Portfolio allocation and Gamson’s Law
*(Warwick and Druckman 2006)
*(Laver et al. 2011)
*(Golder and Thomas 2011) (unpublished paper available as pdf)
(Browne and Franklin 1973)
(Browne and Frendreis 1980)
(Schofield and Laver 1985)
(Warwick and Druckman 2001)
(Carroll and Cox 2007)

5: Government “stability”
*(Laver and Shepsle 1998)
*(Huber and Martinez-Gallardo 2008)
*(Chiba et al. 2011)
(Diermeier and Stevenson 1999, 2000)
(King et al. 1990)

Coalitions and government formation in general
(Laver and Schofield 1998)
(Strom et al. 2008)
(Martin and Vanberg 2011)
(Golder 2006)
(Carroll and Cox 2007)
(Humphreys 2008)
(Diermeier and Van Roozendaal 1998)
ELECTIONS AND VOTING

6-7: Components of the voter utility function

Overview (all should read)
(Adams et al. 2005)

Policy preferences
*(Jessee 2009)
*(Kedar 2005)
*(Macdonald et al. 1998)
(Kedar 2009)
(MacDonald et al. 1991)

Candidate valence
*(Ansolabehere and Snyder 2000)
*(Groseclose 2001)
(Schofield 2004)
(Stokes 1963)

Expressive utility
*(Brennan and Hamlin 1998)
(Schuessler 2000)

Economic/reinspective voting
*(Tucker 2006)
*(Duch and Stevenson 2008)
*(Lewis-Beck et al. 2008)

8: Voter turnout
*(Aldrich 1993)
*(Blais et al. 2000)
*(Fowler and Dawes 2008)
(Großer and Schram 2010)
(Fowler et al. 2008)
(Feddersen and Pesendorfer 1996)
(Feddersen 2004)
(Farber 2009)
ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

9: Effects of electoral systems on party politics
*(Monroe and Rose 2002)
*(Ezrow 2008)
*(Persson et al. 2007)
(Bowler et al. 2006)
(Cox 1997)
(Cox 1999)
(Ezrow 2010)

10: Strategic choice of electoral systems
*(Boix 1999)
*(Blais et al. 2005)
*(Cusack et al. 2007)
(Benoit 2004)
(Benoit 2007)

11: Effects of electoral systems on public policy
*(Iversen and Soskice 2006)
*(Bawn and Rosenbluth 2006)
*(Persson et al. 2007)
(Persson and Tabellini 2004)

LEGISLATIVE PARTIES

12: The logic of legislative parties
*(Kam 2009)
*(Diermeier and Vlachcu 2011)
*(Carey 2007)
(Snyder and Ting 2002)
(Volden and Bergman 2006)
(Cox and McCubbins 2007)
(Krehbiel 1993, 1998, 1999)
REFERENCES


