**AFRICAN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS (SIS 519-005)**

**American University, School of International Service**

Spring 2011 Dr. Carl LeVan

Mondays, 5:30 – 8:00 pm in SIS 333 levan@american.edu

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Location: SIS 343 http://carllevan.com

**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 a holistic view of constitutional design and broad political frameworks, emphasizing the interrelated nature of institutions. 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 to 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:**

Barkan, Joel. 2009. *Legislative Power in Emerging African Democracies*. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner.

Norris, Pippa. 2008. *Driving Democracy: Do Power-Sharing Institutions Work?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Posner, Dan. 2005. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Recommended books:**

Lijphardt, Arendt. 1999*. Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

**Assignments:**

All papers must follow a formatting style such as Chicago or MLA. Consult my website for information and helpful links: <http://carllevan.com/teaching/student-resources/>. Late assignments will be penalized, and AU’s Academic Integrity Code will be strictly enforced.

* Literature review on the readings for a class meeting of your choice. This assignment should be 4 – 6 double spaced pages in length, not including the works cited page. Be sure to (1) situate each author within the literature, (2) explain the relevant concepts in the theoretical readings and outline the evidence in the more empirical works, and (3) critically evaluate the findings. Consult my website for additional tips on literature reviews. Then in collaboration with the other students writing on that topic, prepare “discussion document” that lists the themes, debates, and major concepts in the week’s readings and post it to the appropriate blog thread by 5 pm the night before class. This document will significantly shape class discussion, so craft it thoughtfully. (20% of grade.)
* Political parties essay responding to a question dealing with political parties and the Posner book. You will have a choice of turning this in on either **March 22** or **March 29**, so take a look at which chapters are most likely to interest you. (20% of grade.)
* Literature review for your applied research paper on a topic of your choosing which relates to the course themes. Under the “paper topics” thread, post a message on the class blog by **February 20** which outlines your topic, frames it within related academic research, and lists scholarly sources. The literature review is due on **April 11** and should be 8 – 12 double spaced pages long, plus bibliography. (20% of grade.)
* Class participation. For each class meeting with assigned readings, formulate two or three discussion questions and post them as a comment on our class blog. *Do not browse, email, IM, or text during class*. This is distracting and rude, and cognitive psychologists report that we are all less capable of multi-tasking than we think. (10% of grade.)
* Applied research paper. Your final project should incorporate some original research with primary sources to defend a thesis and empirically test a hypothesis. The paper is **due on the scheduled final exam date** and should be 15 – 20 pages long, plus bibliography. Before you begin your research, you should read Chapter 2 “Evidence and Methods” in the Norris Books because it walks through different kinds of research designs. I also encourage you to browse the code books and tutorials for the data set that accompanies the book. They are available at: http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Data/Data.htm. If you are then inspired to do a quantitative project, the Social Science Research Lab is eager to help. (30% of grade.)

**The API blog:** We will use a class blog on Blackboard for two purposes. First, I have created a thread for you to discuss, develop, and post your paper topic. Second, for the weeks with class presentations, each team should post their short discussion document (see above). Their classmates are also required to post discussion questions as blog comments. When posting a comment, make sure that it is attached to the appropriate thread.

**Grading:** 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. Each literature review on the readings (20%), the literature review for your final research paper (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*.

1. **Introduction** (January 10)

Hall, Peter, and Rosemary Taylor. 1996. “Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms,” *Political Studies* 44 (1996): 936-957.

Norris, Pippa. Chapter 1, “What Drives Democracy?”

Norrs, Pippa. Chapter 3, “Democratic Indicators and Trends”

MLK HOLIDAY (January 17)

**ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL SYSTEMS**

1. **Electoral Systems and Elections** (January 24)

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

\* Moser, Robert G. 2009. Chapter 6, “Electoral Engineering in New Democracies,” in Barany and Moser, eds. *Is Democracy Exportable?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. 2006. *Electoral System Design: the New International IDEA Handbook*. Read Chapter 2 carefully, and retain Chapter 3 as a resource for future discussions. Available at: <http://www.idea.int/publications/esd/index.cfm#toc>

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

1. **Electoral Authoritarianism** (January 31)

\* 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.

\* Magaloni, Beatriz. 2010. “The Game of Electoral Fraud and the Ousting of Authoritarian Rule,” *American Journal of Political Science* 54, 3 (July 2010): 751-765.

Kasfir, Nelson, and Stephen Hippo Twebaze. 2009. Chapter 3, “The Rise and Ebb of Uganda’s No-Party Parliament,” in Barkan, ed.

**Recommended Readings on Electoral Systems and Elections:**

Booysen, Susan. 2008. “The Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Zimbabwe, March and June 2008,” *Electoral* *Studies* 28 (2009): 150-154.

Bunce, Valerie, and Sharon Wolchik. 2010. “Defeating Dictators: Electoral Change and Stability in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes,” *World Politics* 62, 1 (Jan): 43-86.

Cox, Gary. 1997. *Making Votes Count* *Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ferree, Karen. 2010. *Framing the Race in South Africa: The Political Origins of Racial Census Elections*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Golder, Matt. 2005. “Democratic Electoral Systems around the World, 1946 – 2000,” *Electoral Studies* 24 (2005): 103-121.

Mwenda, Andrew. 2007. “Personalizing Power in Uganda,” *Journal of Democracy* 18, 3 (July): 23-37.

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

Mueller, Susanne. 2008. “The Political Economy of Kenya’s Crisis,” *Journal of East African Studies* 2, 2 (July): 185-210. <http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/186404__792829893.pdf>

**EXECUTIVES AND LEGISLATURES**

1. **African Legislatures** (February 7)

**Guest:** Joel Barkan, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, University of Iowa

In Barkan, *Legislative Power in Emerging African Democracies*, read the following:

Chapter 1, “African Legislatures and the ‘Third Wave’ of Democratization”

Chapter 2, “Kenya’s Tortuous Path to Successful Legislative Development”

Chapter 5, “Ghana: Co-optation Despite Democratization in Ghana”

Chapter 6, “Rules and Rents in Nigeria’s National Assembly”

1. **Executive Selection: Concepts and Debates** (February 14)

\* 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.

1. **Dinner Roundtable Discussion** (February 21)

**Guest:** Alexious Butler, U.S. Agency for International Development

Norris, Chapter 2, “Evidence and Methods”

(Don’t forget to post the description and justification of your research question.)

**Recommended Readings**:

Bratton, Michael. 2010. “Formal versus Informal Institutions in Africa,” *Journal of Democracy* 18 (2010).

Morgenstern, Scott, and Benito Nacif. 2002. *Legislative Politics in Latin America.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shugart, Matthew and John Carey. 1992. *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thomas, Melissa and Oumar Sissokho. 2005. “Liaison Legislature: The Role of the National Assembly in Senegal,” *Journal of Modern African Studies*. 43, 1 (March): 97-117.

**PARTY SYSTEMS**

1. **Political Party Development** (February 28)

\* Samuels, David, and Matthew Shugart. 2010. “Introduction,” in *Presidents, Parties, and Prime Ministers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

\* Erdmann, Gero. 2007. “Party Research: Western European Bias and the ‘African Labyrinth’” in Basedau, Erdmann, and Mehler, eds. *Votes, Money and Violence: Political Parties and Elections in Sub-Saharan Africa.* Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Barkan, Joel. 2009. Chapter 7, “South Africa: Emerging Legislature or Rubber Stamp?” in Barkan, ed.

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>

SPRING BREAK (No class on March 7)

1. **Party Systems after the Third Wave** (March 14)

\* Sartori, Giovanni. 1976. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, Chapter 5

Bogaards, Matthijs. 2004. “Counting Parties and Indentifying Dominant Party Systems in Africa,” *European Journal of Political Research* 43 (2004): 173-197. Available at: <http://www.olemiss.edu/courses/pol628/bogaards04.pdf>

\* 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:**

Carey, John and Reynolds, Andrew. 2007. “Parties and Accountable Government in New Democracies,” *Party Politics* 13, 2 (March 2007).

Dunning, Thad, and Lauren Harrison. 2010. “Cross-Cutting Cleavages and Ethnic Voting: An Experimental Study of Cousinage in Mali,” *American Political Science Review* 104, 1 (2010): 21-39.

Eifert, Benn, Edward Miguel, and Daniel Posner, “Political Competition and Ethnic Identification in Africa,” *American Journal of Political Science* 54, 2 (April 2010): 494-510.

Lipset and 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.

Rakner, Lise; Svåsand, Lars; Khembo, Nixon S. 2007. “Fissions and Fusions, Foes and Friends: Party System Restructuring in Malawi in the 2004 General Elections,” *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (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.

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.

1. **Identities and Institutions in Zambia** (March 21)

Posner, Dan. Chapters 1 – 3

1. **Electoral Strategy and Political Coalitions** (March 28)

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

**POLITICAL INCLUSION AND RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION**

1. **Federalism and Constitutional Reforms** (April 4)

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.

\* Joseph, Richard and Alexandra Gilles. 2010. “Nigeria’s Season of Uncertainty,” *Current History* (May 2010): 179-185.

Read Ambassador John Campbell’s blog, *Africa in Transition*. At: http://blogs.cfr.org/campbell/

1. **Discussion of class projects** (April 11)
2. **Coalition Governments and Power Sharing Agreements** (April 18)

\* Oyugi, Walter. 2006. “Coalition Politics and Coalition Governments in Africa,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 24, 1 (2006): 53 – 79.

\* Cheeseman, Nic, and Blessing-Miles Tendi. 2010. “Power-sharing in Comparative Perspective: the Dynamics of ‘Unity Government’ in Kenya and Zimbabwe,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 48, 2 (2010): 203-229.

LeVan, Carl. 2011. “Power Sharing in Africa’s Uncertain Democracies,” *Governance: an International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, 24, 1 (Jan. 2011): 31-53.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2010.01514.x/pdf>

1. **The Economics of Democracy and Distribution** (April 25)

\* Lyne, Mona. 2008. “The Voter’s Dilemma: Collective or Clientelistic Goods?” Chapter 1 in *The Voter’s Dilemma and Democratic Accountability: Latin America and Beyond.* Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, pp. 22-62.

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>

\* Arriola, Leonardo. 2009. “Patronage and Political Stability in Africa,” *Comparative Political Studies* 42, 10 (2009): 1339 – 62.

**Recommended Readings**:

Laakso, Lisa. 2003. “Opposition Politics in Independent Zimbabwe,” *African Studies Quarterly* 7, (2003): 119-137.

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 (2003): 297-321.

**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](http://www.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.