

PSC 350.01 – Writing Intensive Class  
DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEMS  
Tuesday and Thursday: 14:00-15:15  
Graham Building 203

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Office hours: W 1:30-3:00 & by appointment.

Introduction:

This course offers an advanced discussion of concepts and theories relevant for the study of democratic political systems. It will analyze the dynamics and consequences of differences among democracies. It will discuss politics in several democracies, including those of the United Kingdom, Brazil, Germany, Japan, and New Zealand.

Course Requirements:

The class requires students to write two papers, each of which is worth 30 percent of the class grade. For each paper, a bibliography is worth 8 points (for a total of 16 points) and an outline is worth 12 points (or a total of 24 points). Appendix one discusses these requirements in more detail.

Course Policies:

This course will combine lectures with class discussion. Students who miss classes, do not do the readings, and do not review their notes from previous classes will do poorly on assignments. For every day an assignment is late, a student's grade will drop by an entire letter grade.

Please respect the following rules in class:

- Turn off your cell phones, both in the class and when you visit me during office hours;
- Remove hats in class or during office visits;
- Use laptops only for note-taking;
- Be punctual and do not leave a class before it is over;
- Give me at least a couple of days to respond to emails.

University policy requires that you obtain certification from the Office of Disability Services if you have a disability that merits accommodation. Its address is: EUC, Suite 215 and its telephone number is: 334-5440.

Books for Purchase:

Gerald L. Curtis, *The Logic of Japanese Politics: Leaders, Institutions, and the Limits of Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

Peter R. Kingstone and Timothy J. Power, eds., *Democratic Brazil Revisited* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008).

Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

Geoffrey K. Roberts, *German Politics Today* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2000).

Course Topics and Reading Assignments:

Sessions	Dates	Topics and Reading
1.	Jan. 19	Introduction
2-3.	Jan. 21 & 26	Democracies and Non-Democracies Readings: Lijphart, <i>Patterns of Democracy</i> , chap. 4 & Laza Kekic, "The Economist Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy," in The Economist, ed., <i>The World in 2008</i> (London, 2008), (available at the Blackboard site for this class).
4. <b>Bibliographies due</b>	Jan. 28	Central Characteristics the US Political System (or establishing a baseline for comparison)
5, 6, 7 & 8. <b>1<sup>st</sup> outline due (Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Feb. 2, 4, 9 & 11.	Majoritarian Democracy: England and New Zealand Reading: Lijphart, <i>Patterns of Democracy</i> , chaps. 2 & 5.
9.	Feb. 16	Writing Argumentative Essays Reading: Stephan Van Evera, <i>Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science</i> (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), appendix.
10, 11, 12, 13, 14. <b>1<sup>st</sup> paper due (Feb 25<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Feb. 18, 23, 25 & March 2 & 4	Consensual Democracy: Germany Readings: Lijphart, <i>Patterns of Democracy</i> , chaps. 3, 8 & Roberts, <i>German Politics Today</i> , chaps. 1-8.
15, 16, 17, 18, 19 & 20	March 16, 18, 23, 25, 30 & April 1	Executive-Legislative Relations in a Federal System: Brazil Reading: Lijphart, <i>Patterns of Democracy</i> , chaps. 7, 10 & Montero, <i>Brazilian Politics</i> .
21, 22, 23, 24 & 25.	April 6, 8, 13, 15 & 20	Electoral Laws and Policy Dynamics: Japan Reading: Curtis, <i>The Logic of Japanese Politics</i> , introduction, & chaps. 1-6.
26 & 27	April 22 & 27	Comparing Different Types of Democracy Reading: Lijphart, <i>Patterns of Democracy</i> , chaps. 14-17.
28.	April 29	Conclusion

Appendix 1 -- Paper Assignments

The first paper assignment requires that you select two foreign democracies from *The Economist's* list of full or flawed democracies (only one of which can be Brazil, Germany, Japan, New Zealand or the UK) and explain which of the two is more consensual or majoritarian. The list of course topics and reading assignments contains relevant deadlines.

The second paper assignment requires that you identify a foreign political system that could serve as a source of ideas about how to reform the politics of Brazil. You can focus on certain features of another political system or the system as a whole that could maximize certain objectives (e.g., more cooperation, more income distribution, more representation). The objective of this assignment is to have you become familiar enough with the politics of Brazil to be able to make a fruitful comparison between this country's political system and the political system of another country (in the institutional dimensions covered by class readings and lectures). Deadlines will be announced in class.

The papers should be empirical and analytical. They need to cite relevant material to document their claims. Your papers should defend their conclusions; they have to make, in other words, persuasive arguments. Each paper should not exceed 10 double-spaced, typewritten pages (12-pt font with at least 1.5 margins and including a bibliography) and be at least 8 such pages. Please insert page numbers and use the

citation format of the *American Political Science Review*. You will lose points if your citations are incorrect.

Please cite at least 8 books or articles not on the list of required readings, though each bibliography should list at least 16 relevant sources – and relevance will be defined during class. These should be scholarly materials (articles or books), the results of official or non-governmental investigations, or legal materials. While students are free to surf the web, they cannot cite materials from the internet for their papers (though using the web to access journal articles or books is fine). Class discussions will also identify the elements of an effective outline.

### Appendix 3 -- Notes on Writing English and for Using the Writing Center

Effective English writing is brief and austere. Several rules worth following include:

1. Always put subjects before verbs and their objects. Do not say: “The presidency was won by the PAN.” It is better to say that, “The PAN won the presidency.”
2. Use strong verbs and avoid adverbs and adjectives. Never use two to make a point. It is much better to say that: “Economic crisis transformed political preferences,” than to say “political preferences about parties were fueled by a dramatic and major economic crisis.” The first is much better (and shorter).
3. Never use the passive voice. Always identify your subject. Never say: “Logit analysis was used in this paper.” It is better to say, “The paper (or “I,” or “my analysis,” etc. ) uses logit models.”
4. Avoid past tenses, if you can. The present tense and the active voice make for better papers.

A great and short primer about writing English is William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*. *The Economist* magazine is also marvelous for its use of the English language. Gary Cox and Robert Bates are two political scientists who write exceedingly well.

Visit the Writing Center often as part of a more general strategy to improve your writing. Conversations with students and with the Center’s Director suggest that a useful visit starts with a concrete request. A good paper, like a productive meeting with a writing consultant, starts with a proactive stance, one where the writer is looking for help to address one or more issues relevant for her paper assignment. Questions worth raising with the Writing Center or anyone else whose advice you seek include:

- (1) Is my argument persuasive? Do I have convincing reasons in support of my conclusion?
- (2) What are my empirical claims? Do I have evidence for my claims?
- (3) Have I organized my paper effectively?
- (4) Have I filled my paper with unnecessary facts?

It is best not to ask a tutor or friend to spell- and grammar-check your writing. Only raise these issues if you are not sure how to apply the rules for writing good English. Instead, use your visits to the Writing Center to obtain answers to questions like the aforementioned. Finally, write a summary of your session with the Writing Center consultant. Identify the central points of your conversation and review these notes as you draft your paper.