

PSCI 240-001:

American Democracy in Comparative Perspective

XXXXX 2019 – Face-to-face Edition
Drexel University
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XXXXX, 4:00-5:50 PM
XXXXX Building, Room XX

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Appointments: <https://jacksantucci.acuityscheduling.com>

1 Overview & goals

Should the U.S. political system work more like other democracies? Should we increase the number of parties? Reduce the power of low-population states? Switch to a parliamentary system of government? Or should we walk some other path, specific to our own country? We need two things to answer these questions: a smart theory of democracy, then some sense of how change happens.

We will use two good theories to look at American democracy in comparative perspective. One comes from the field of comparative politics (i.e., the study of other countries' domestic politics). The other comes from American politics but may help us understand other countries as well. These theories are in tension and can lead to different answers about the same reform proposal. I will ask you to work through that tension in reading, writing, and in-class discussion. When this course is over, you will:

- Have practiced writing clearly for busy readers;
- Be able point out tradeoffs when someone says we should change the rules;
- Have a powerful mental model of democratic politics at your disposal.

2 Things to buy

Please purchase the following, available from the Drexel bookstore and elsewhere:

- Taylor, Steven L., Matthew S. Shugart, Arend Lijphart, and Bernard Grofman. 2014. *A Different Democracy: American Government in a Thirty-One-Country Perspective*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

3 Requirements

Your grade will be based on the following components:

1. Attendance (10%) – Come to class daily. Paper prompts test mastery of readings *and* what’s said in class.
2. Three short papers (30% each) – Prompts forthcoming, based on our progress as a group. These will be due when it makes sense to reinforce a set of lessons. See below for due dates.

4 Other policies

You agree to:

1. Treat guest speakers and classmates with respect.
2. Check Drexel email daily through the date of the final exam.
3. Attend class and meet course deadlines *except in documented cases of bereavement, severe illness, or medical emergency*. You must provide a doctor’s note or funeral announcement if you cannot meet a deadline and/or attend a class meeting. Out-of-class written work loses five points for each 24-hour period past the time and date it is due.
4. Use Internet search or a dictionary to look up words you do not understand.
5. Abide by all other Drexel policies, found at the following websites. Note: I reserve the right to use plagiarism-detection software.
 - Academic integrity: http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/academic_dishonesty.asp
 - Disability accommodation: <http://drexel.edu/oed/disabilityResources/students/>
 - Add/Drop: <http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/course-add-drop>
 - Course withdrawal: <http://drexel.edu/provost/policies/course-withdrawal>

I agree to:

1. Abide by any grading guidelines in this syllabus and related instructions for assignments. Grading is on the 0-100 scale: 97 and up (A+), 93-96 (A), 90-92 (A-), 87-89 (B+), 83-87 (B), 80-82 (B-), and so on, down to 50 (F).
2. Answer student e-mail within 48 business hours. Business hours are 9 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday, non-holiday.
3. Except for the required books, post links to readings on Blackboard, if not the readings themselves.
4. Grade written work within 10 business days of submission.
5. Notify you of changes to this syllabus at least one week in advance of affected due dates.
6. Give office hours on a by-appointment basis. (See link above.) Students who are not in Philadelphia can book these times for phone conversations.

5 Schedule of work

5.1 Housekeeping

Class 1 This syllabus and “How to Get an ‘A’ on a Paper.”

5.2 Two theories of democracy. How are they different?

Class 2 Two items:

- Dahl, Robert A. 1971. “Democratization and Public Opposition.” In *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, 1-16. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- “Introduction” in Taylor et al.

Class 3 Schwartz, Thomas. 1989. “Why Parties?” UCLA, Typescript. **Read pages 1-3, 12-17.**

5.3 Constitutions and majority rule

Class 4 “Political Engineering and the US Constitution” (including appendix) and “Constitutions” in Taylor et al.

Class 5 First essay **due today**. Also, two items:

- “Federalism and Division of Power” in Taylor et al.
- Stepan, Alfred. 1999. “Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model.” *Journal of Democracy* 10 (4).

Class 6 “Legislative Power” and “Executive Power” in Taylor et al.

Class 7 Review Schwartz (1989). Lecture on that framework in a multi-party system.

5.4 Enter political parties

Class 8 “Political Parties, Election Campaigns, and Interest Groups” in Taylor et al.

Class 9 Cox, Gary W. 1987. “The Origin of the Efficient Secret.” Ch. 6 in *The Efficient Secret: The Cabinet and the Development of Political Parties in Victorian England*, 45-67. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Class 10 Bawn, Kathleen, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, and John Zaller. 2012. “A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (3).

Class 11 Mair, Peter and Cas Mudde. 1998. “The Party Family and its Study.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 1.

5.5 Enter electoral systems

Class 12 “Elections and Electoral Systems” in Taylor et al.

Class 13 Ahmed, Amel. 2012. “Introduction: Contradictions and Ambiguities of Democratization.” Ch. 1 in *Democracy and the Politics of Electoral System Choice: Engineering Electoral Dominance*, 1-32. New York: Cambridge University Press.

5.6 Does the number of parties matter for democracy?

Class 14 “Comparative Conclusions” in Taylor et al. Second essay **due today**.

Class 15 Mainwaring, Scott. 1993. “Presidentialism, Multipartyism, and Democracy: The Difficult Combination.” *Comparative Political Studies* 26 (2).

Class 17 Lepsius, M. Rainer. 1978. “From Fragmented Party Democracy to Government by Emergency Decree and National Socialist Takeover: Germany.” In *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Europe*, edited by Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, 34-79. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

5.7 Active issues in the U.S.

Class 18 Two items on preferential voting:

- Donovan, Todd, Caroline Tolbert, and Kellen Gracey. 2016. “Campaign Civility Under Preferential and Plurality Voting.” *Electoral Studies* 42.
- Santucci, Jack. 2018. “Maine Ranked-choice Voting as a Case of Electoral-system Change.” *Representation* 54 (3).

Class 19 Two items on non-proportional systems of minority representation:

- Holman, Mirya. 2017. “Women in Local Government: What We Know and Where We Go from Here.” *State & Local Government Review* 49 (4).
- Guinier, Lani. 1991. “The Triumph of Tokenism: The Voting Rights Act and the Theory of Black Electoral Success.” *Michigan Law Review* Vol. 89. **Skim.**

Class 20 Whatever you want to discuss (e.g., the final paper).