

POLS G9208

Legislatures in Historical and Comparative Perspective

Spring 2008

Wed. 10:00–11:50am

711 International Affairs Building

Prof. Gregory Wawro

741 International Affairs Bldg.

Office Hours: Tues. 2:30–4:30pm and by appt.

Course web site: <http://www.columbia.edu/~gjaw10/g9208.html>

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Course Description

If we accept John Locke's argument that the legislative power is the supreme power in a democratic commonwealth, then it follows that a thorough understanding of democratic systems requires a thorough understanding of legislatures. The vast amount of energy and effort that has been put into the study of legislatures throughout the history of the discipline suggests that there is broad agreement among political scientists with Locke's assertion. This has had implications not just for our understanding of how democracy works, but also for the way the discipline has evolved. Legislative scholars have long been in the theoretical and empirical vanguard of political science. Theoretical and methodological innovations have often occurred first in the field of legislative studies and then have diffused to other areas of the discipline.

In the past decade, these kinds of innovations have continued through a surge in work on legislatures from historical and comparative perspectives. A key reason that this work has advanced our understanding of legislative behavior is that it takes advantage of institutional and contextual variation. Institutional structure has been viewed as central to understanding legislatures since the birth of the discipline, but only recently has there been serious engagement with variation across historical and comparative dimensions in order to better understand why and how institutional structure matters. The goal of this course is to provide an in-depth exploration of this work, focusing not just on the substantive issues that the literature grapples with, but also on the methodological approaches it employs to grapple with them.

Course Requirements

Participation in class discussion accounts for 30% of your grade. This is **not** a lecture course. I expect you to share your comments and criticism about the course's subject matter with the class. You should exert as much effort as I do to keep the class discussion lively and enlightening. Each student will choose at least one week in which he/she will facilitate discussion by doing a 15 to 20 minute presentation on the assigned readings. The participation component of the grade is not limited to the presentations, however. Depending on enrollment in the course, students may be called on to do additional presentations.

A 20 to 30 page term paper accounts for the remaining 70% of your grade. The term paper will consist of original research on a topic of your own choosing but conditional on my approval. Midway through the semester you will submit a short proposal that clearly and concisely lays out the question you will address in your term paper and discusses in detail how

you propose to answer this question (what sources and data you will use, etc.). This proposal will be due in class on March 12. Students will give short presentations of their papers on the last day of class.

Course Readings

All books have been ordered through Book Culture (the book store formerly known as Labyrinth). All readings are either on reserve at Lehman Library or are available through the course web site or the various online services that Columbia subscribes to ([E] denotes online availability through Columbia libraries).

Outline of Classes

Week 1: Introduction January 23

Week 2: Perspectives on Historical and Comparative Research January 30

- Gaddis, John Lewis. 2002. *The Landscape of History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gamm, Gerald and John Huber. 2002. “Legislatures as Political Institutions: Beyond the Contemporary Congress.” In Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner, eds., *Political Science: State of the Discipline III*. New York: American Political Science Association/W.W. Norton.
- Laitin, David. 2002. “Comparative Politics: The State of the Subdiscipline.” In Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner, eds., *Political Science: State of the Discipline III*. New York: American Political Science Association/W.W. Norton.
- Wawro, Gregory and Ira Katznelson. 2007. “Congress and History: Enhancing the Methodological Repertoire.” Paper presented at the History of Congress Conference, Princeton, May 18–19 (pdf version available from course web site).

Week 3: Theories of Institutions/Institutional Theories February 6

- Carey, John M. 2000. “Parchment, Equilibria, and Institutions.” *Comparative Political Studies* 33 (6/7): 735–761. [E]
- Pierson, Paul. 2000. “Path Dependence, Increasing Returns, and the Study of Politics.” *American Political Science Review* 94 (2): 251–67. [E]
- Grief, Avner and David Laitin. 2004. “A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change.” *American Political Science Review* 98: 633–653 [E]
- Diermeier, Daniel and Keith Krehbiel. 2003. “Institutionalism as a Methodology.” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 15 (2): 123–44. [E]
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1988. “Spatial Models of Legislative Choice.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 13: 259–319. [E]

Week 4: Democratic Transitions and Legislative Origins

February 13

- Aldrich, John H., Calvin C. Jillson, and Rick W. Wilson. 2002. “Why Congress? What the Failure of the Confederation Congress and the Survival of the Federal Congress Tell Us About the New Institutionalism.” In David W. Brady and Mathew D. McCubbins, eds. *Party, Process, and Political Change in Congress*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Wilson, Rick K. 1999. Transitional Governance in the United States: Lessons from the First Federal Congress. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 24: 543–68. [E]
- Londregan, John B. 2000. *Legislative Institutions and Ideology in Chile*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Introduction and Chapters 1–3.
- Bensel, Richard. 2007. “States out of Nature: The Legislative Founding of Democracies.” Paper presented at the History of Congress Conference, Princeton, May 18–19 (pdf version available from course web site).

Week 5: The Electoral Connection in Historical and Comparative Perspective February 20

- Cain, Bruce E., John A. Ferejohn, and Morris P. Fiorina. 1984. “The Constituency Service Basis of the Personal Vote for U.S. Representatives and British Members of Parliament” *American Political Science Review* 78 (1): 110–125.
- Cox, Gary W. 1987. *The Efficient Secret: The Cabinet and the Development of Political Parties in Victorian England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carson, Jamie L., and Erik J. Engstrom. 2005. “Assessing the Electoral Connection: Evidence from the Early United States.” *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (4): 746–757. [E]

Week 6: Institutional Development and Change

February 27

- Polsby, Nelson W. 1968. “The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives.” *American Political Science Review* 62: 144–168. [E]
- Gamm, Gerald, and Kenneth Shepsle. 1989. “Emergence of Legislative Institutions: Standing Committees in the House and Senate, 1810–1825.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 14: 39–66. [E]
- Binder, Sarah A. 1996. “The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice: Allocating Parliamentary Rights in the House, 1789–1990.” *American Political Science Review* 90: 8–20. [E]
- Schickler, Eric. 2001. *Disjointed Pluralism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1–4 and 6.

Week 7: Congressional Parties in Historical Perspective

March 5

- Cox, Gary W. and Mathew D. McCubbins. 2005. *Setting The Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Krehbiel, Keith. 2005. “Partisan Roll Rates in a Nonpartisan Legislature.” Stanford GSB Research Paper No. 1870(R1). [E]
- Aldrich, John, Mark M. Berger, and David Rohde, “The Historical Variability in Conditional Party Government, 1877–1994.” In David W. Brady and Mathew D. McCubbins, eds. *Party, Process, and Political Change in Congress*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Week 8: Committees and the Floor

March 12

- Shepsle, Kenneth A., and Barry R. Weingast. 1994. “Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 19: 149–79. [E]
- Gilligan, Thomas W., and Keith Krehbiel. 1987. “Collective Decisionmaking and Standing Committees: An Informational Rationale for Restrictive Amendment Procedures.” *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 3: 287–335. [E]
- Londregan, John B. 2000. *Legislative Institutions and Ideology in Chile*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4, 7, 8, and Conclusion.
- Huber, John D. 1992. “Restrictive Legislative Procedures in France and the U.S.” *The American Political Science Review* 86: 675–88. [E]

Week 9: Spring Break—No class

March 19

Week 10: Legislatures in Governing Systems

March 26

- North, Douglas C., and Barry R. Weingast. 1989. “Constitutions and Commitment: Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice.” *Journal of Economic History* XLIX (December): 803–32. [E]
- Krehbiel, Keith. 1998. *Pivotal Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1–6 and 9.
- Stepan, Alfred and Cindy Skach. 1993. “Constitutional Frameworks and Democratic Consolidation: Parliamentarism versus Presidentialism.” *World Politics* 46(1): 1–22. [E]
- Cheibub, José Antonio and Fernando Limongi. 2002 “Democratic Institutions and Regime Survival: Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies Reconsidered.” *Annual Review of Political Science* (pdf version available from course web site).

Week 11: Cabinet Formation and Stability

April 2

- Laver, Michael and Kenneth Shepsle. 1996. *Making and Breaking Governments*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1–9.
- Huber, John D. 1996. “The Vote of Confidence in Parliamentary Democracies” *American Political Science Review* 90: 269–82. [E]
- Huber, John D. 1998. “How does Cabinet Instability affect Political Performance: Credible Commitment, Information, and Health Care Cost Containment in Parliamentary Politics.” *The American Political Science Review* 92: 577–92. [E]

Week 12: Bicameralism

April 9

- Tsebelis, George and Jeannette Money. 1997. *Bicameralism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Cutrone, Michael and Nolan McCarty. “Does Bicameralism Matter?” Working paper (pdf version available from course web site).
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, James M. Snyder, Jr. and Michael M. Ting. 2003. “Bargaining in Bicameral Legislatures: When and Why Does Malapportionment Matter?” *American Political Science Review* 97: 471–481 [E]

Week 13: Legislatures and Bureaucracy

April 16

- Huber, John D. and Charles R. Shipan. 2002. *Deliberate Discretion? Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Huber, John D. and Nolan McCarty. 2004. “Bureaucratic Capacity, Delegation, and Political Reform.” *American Political Science Review* 98(3): 481–94. [E]
- Carpenter, Daniel P. 2000. “State Building through Reputation Building: Coalitions of Esteem and Program Innovation in the National Postal System, 1883–1913.” *Studies in American Political Development* 14 (2): 121–155. [E]

Week 14: Lawmaking and Obstruction

April 23

- Binder, Sarah and Steve Smith. 1997. *Politics or Principle?* Brookings. Chapters 1–4.
- Dion, Douglas. 1997. *Turning the Legislative Thumbscrew*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Chapters 1, 2, 7–8.
- Wawro, Gregory J. and Eric Schickler. 2006. *Filibuster: Obstruction and Lawmaking in the U.S. Senate*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1–4, 6, 8, and 11.

Week 15: Discussion of Research Papers

April 30