Comparative Democratic Processes
Political Science, G8526
Columbia University, Spring 2014

Professor Kimuli Kasara
Office: IAB 717
Office Hours: Tuesday 2-4.
e-mail: kk2432 • columbia.edu

Time: Tues 4:10-6:00
Location: IAB 711

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores with the individual and organizational determinants of candidate selection, accountability and representation in developed and developing democracies. It focuses several questions: 1) Why are political parties necessary? 2) Why are some parties more disciplined or cohesive than others? 3) What explains variation in the importance of programmatic politics? 4) How do people decide whether and how to vote? 5) How do parties and candidates use spending to win votes? 6) What institutions foster substantive and descriptive representation? 7) What are the causes and the effects of electoral laws?

REQUIREMENTS

- Class participation – 20% of the final grade for the class.

- Referee reports - One due on or before March 11th and one due after – 10% each
  Each student will submit two referee reports. The reports ought to start with a brief summary of the paper followed by a justification of your recommendation (publish, revise and resubmit, or reject). The reports should include a detailed discussion of the rigor and plausibility of the theory advanced and/or an evaluation of the quality of the evidence provided. Because constructive criticism is an important part of our profession, these reports ought to include suggestions on how the paper can be improved. Finally, reports ought to include a discussion of whether the paper makes an important contribution to debates in a research area of general interest. Reports should be 1.5 to 2 single-spaced pages long and students will post them on Courseworks at 9am on the day the paper is being discussed in class.

- Presentation of research proposal – 20%
  Each student will make a presentation near the end of the semester describing a proposed research project.

- Final paper or final exam – 40%
  Students in the political science PhD program must write a research paper based on the topic of the presentation. All other students may choose to either write the research paper or take a take-home final “exam.” Students choosing to write the final paper who desire an incomplete will receive one that expires on August 1, 2014 (the date on which all final research papers are due).
COURSE OUTLINE

Readings for which there are no links will be posted in the “Class Files” section of Courseworks.

Session 1 (21/01): Introduction

Session 2 (28/01): Parties: Why Parties?


Session 3 (04/02): Parties: Party Cohesion and Candidate Selection


Session 4 (11/02): Parties: The Personal Vote


Session 5 (18/02): Parties: Programmatic Politics


Session 6 (25/02): Voting Behavior: Party Identification and Partisan Bias


Session 7 (04/03): Voting Behavior: Individual Interests and the Vote


Session 8 (11/03): Voting Behavior: Accountability/Economic Voting


Session (18/03): Spring Recess
Session 9 (25/03): Turnout


Session 10 (01/04): Voters & Parties: Party Strategies for Winning Votes


Session 11 (08/04): Voters & Parties: Representation


**Session 12 (15/04): Voters & Parties: Ethnicity**


**Session 13 (22/04): Voters & Parties: Choosing Electoral Laws**


Session 14 (29/04): Presentation of Research Projects