POLI 7971: Comparative Legislatures  
Thursdays: 3:00 – 5:50pm  
Location: 210 Stubbs  
Professor: Dr. Yann Kerevel  
Office: Stubbs 230  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30 – 3:30pm or by appt.  
Email: ykerev1@lsu.edu  

Overview  
The study of legislative institutions has been dominated by research on the U.S. Congress. Despite this singular focus, the design of legislatures, their organization, their relations with other branches of government, the methods by which legislative representatives reach office, and the way in which representatives serve their constituents vary widely across countries. This course is designed to introduce students to research on legislatures across the globe.  

Required Readings  
Most readings are peer-reviewed journal articles easily found through the LSU library system or Google Scholar. Any book chapters will be provided in PDF format on Moodle.  

Evaluation  
Weekly writing assignments and discussion questions: 20%  
Each week in which there are assigned readings, I expect students to write a 2-page critical review of the week’s readings. In your review, you should address at least some of the questions listed below. In addition to writing the 2-page review, I also expect students to submit at least 3 questions related to the readings for discussion. The writing assignment and the 3 questions are due by 1pm on the day of class and should be submitted electronically by email.  

1. What is the research question and why is it important?  
2. What is the authors’ theory (if there is one)?  
3. How do the authors test the theory (i.e. what methods and data do they use?)  
4. What are the authors’ primary findings?  
5. What are the authors’ main conclusions and what are their implications?  
6. What are your criticisms of the research?  

Class Participation: 30%  
I expect all students to come to class prepared to discuss the week’s readings and contribute to class discussion. Attendance is not optional and each unexcused absence will result in the loss of one whole letter grade. Students with an excused absence must write a 10-page literature review of the week’s readings plus additional recommended readings on the same topic.  

Final Paper: 50%  
Each student is required to write a 20-25 empirical research paper of publishable quality related to the study of legislatures. Students are expected to submit a research proposal, a literature review, a rough draft, and a final draft. In addition, students will present their research on the final day of class. Students are also expected to meet individually with the professor as necessary as they develop their research paper. Below are the basic expectations of each component but further guidance will be provided throughout the course.
- **Research Proposal:** A brief 2-3 page proposal is due electronically on February 18th. At a minimum, the proposal should include a research question, a brief discussion that places the research question within the context of the larger literature, a brief discussion of how the question will be answered, and a reference list of relevant literature.

- **Literature Review:** By March 17th, students must submit a 8-10 page review of the literature relevant to their research question. The literature review may be written as a stand alone assignment, or the beginning of a rough draft of the final research paper. The literature review is due in class.

- **Rough Draft:** On April 7th, students must submit a rough draft of their final paper. Rough drafts should include everything except empirical results and a conclusion, although including empirical results is strongly recommended. Students should submit two copies of their rough draft, one that identifies the author, and one that is anonymous. The professor will circulate the anonymous versions to fellow classmates for peer review. Each student is required to write two anonymous reviews of the papers they receive. Student reviews are to be submitted electronically to the professor by April 16th and will then be circulated back to the authors along with comments from the professor.

- **Research Presentation:** On April 28th, each student will give an 8-10 minute formal presentation of their research paper to the class.

- **Final Paper:** A polished version of the final paper is due Monday, May 2nd by 5pm. Students should submit a hard copy and an electronic version.

**Grading scale:**

- 97.0 to 100 A+
- 93.0 to 96.9 A
- 90.0 to 92.9 A-
- 87.0 to 89.9 B+
- 83.0 to 86.9 B
- 80.0 to 82.9 B-
- 77.0 to 79.9 C+
- 73.0 to 76.9 C
- 70.0 to 72.9 C-
- 67.0 to 69.9 D+
- 63.0 to 66.9 D
- 60.0 to 62.9 D
- below 60.0 F

**Students requiring special accommodation:** Louisiana State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to speak with the Disability Services and the instructor, as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. This publication/material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Disability Services, 115 Johnston Hall, (225)578-5919.

**General Statement on Academic Integrity:** Louisiana State University adopted the Commitment to Community in 1995 to set forth guidelines for student behavior both inside and outside of the classroom. The Commitment to Community charges students to maintain high standards of academic and personal integrity. All students are expected to read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found online at [www.lsu.edu/saa](http://www.lsu.edu/saa). It is your responsibility as a student at LSU to know and understand the academic standards for our community.

Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability. For graduate students, suspension is the appropriate outcome for the first offense.
Plagiarism and Citation Method: As a student at LSU, it is your responsibility to refrain from plagiarizing the academic property of another and to utilize appropriate citation methods for all coursework. Ignorance of the citation method is not an excuse for academic misconduct. Remember there is a difference between paraphrasing and quoting and how to properly cite each respectively. If you have questions regarding what is appropriate, please consult with the library’s tutorials on avoiding plagiarism and proper citation formats.

Schedule of Readings

January 14: Introduction – U.S. Congress in Comparative Perspective


January 21: The Electoral Connection


January 28: Political Ambition and Legislative Careers


**February 4: Roll Call Voting**


**February 11: Estimating Ideal Points (no readings)**

*There are no assigned readings for this class. Instead, you should come to class with Stata and R installed on your laptop. We will go through an example of how to take raw roll call data (from Mexico) and transform it into a useable format to generate ideal points using W-Nominate.*

**February 18 (no class, conference)**

Individual research proposals are due electronically.

**February 25: Party Switching**


**March 3: Electoral Systems**


**March 10: Candidate Selection Methods**


**March 17: Executive-Legislative Relations (lit review due)**


**March 24: (no class, spring break)**

**March 31: Agenda-Setting**


April 7: (no class, MPSA)
circulate rough drafts for peer review

April 14: Competing Principals


April 21: Race, Gender and Class


April 28: Final Presentations