Overview
This course will introduce you to the comparative study of political institutions, which includes the study of formal rules and organizations. We will cover political party systems, electoral rules, the differences between presidentialism and parliamentarism, institutional rules to enhance descriptive representation, judicial institutions and electoral management bodies.

Required Texts (available electronically through LSU)


Evaluation
Weekly writing assignments and discussion questions: 20%
Each week in which there are assigned readings, I expect students to write a 2-3 page critical review of the week’s readings. In your review, you should address at least some of the questions listed below, with an emphasis on question #6. In addition to writing the 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: 20%
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.

Hypothesis Test: 15%
You are to write a 2-3 page paper that provides a simple test of a hypothesis related to the effective number of political parties. You must also present your findings in class on February 21st. More details will be provided in class.

Final Paper: 45%
Each student is required to write a 20-25 empirical research paper of publishable quality related to the study of political institutions. 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 March 9th. 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 23rd, students must submit an 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 electronically.
- 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 17th and will then be circulated back to the authors along with comments from the professor.
- Research Presentation: On April 25th, 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 May 2nd. 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


**Attendance and Late Assignments:** Attendance for all class sessions is mandatory and as a rule I do not accept late assignments. I will subtract one whole letter grade for each missed class and for each late assignment.

**Other Policies**  
*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.

I will report all instances of plagiarism. If you are caught plagiarizing you may fail the assignment, fail the course and/or be asked to leave the graduate program.

**Schedule of Required Readings**

**Week 1: January 17 (first class) Do Institutions Matter?**  
Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapters 1, 15, 16. *(Note: I have also provided chapters 2-3 in case you need greater familiarity with Lijphart’s concepts. You do not need to cover chapters 1-3 in your weekly literature review).*


**Week 2: January 24 Origins of Party Systems 1**


**Week 3: January 31 Origins of Party Systems 2**


**Week 4: February 7 Electoral Rules and Party Systems**


**Week 5: February 14 Consequences of Electoral Rules**


**Week 6: February 21 Counting Parties Presentations**

*Recommended Readings:*


**Week 7: February 28 (no class, Mardi Gras)**

**Week 8: March 7 Presidentialism v Parliamentarism 1**

**March 9th: Research proposal due**

**Week 9: March 14 Presidentialism & Parliamentarism**

**Week 10: March 21 Descriptive Representation 1**


**March 23: Lit Review Due**

**Week 11: March 28 Descriptive Representation 2**


**Week 12: April 4 Institutional Design and Democratization**

April 7: Rough Draft Due

April 11: No class, Spring Break

April 17: Peer Review Due

**Week 14: April 18 Judicial Institutions**


Week 15: April 25 - Final Presentations

May 2: Final Papers Due.