Course information:
Time: Monday 1:00 - 4:00, Pond Lab 236

Contact information for Professor:
E-mail: sgolder@psu.edu
Office: 305 Pond Lab
Office Hours: By appointment, or just stop by my office.

Course Description

This course focuses on the life cycle of government cabinets and how the organization and role of the executive is affected by its relationship with the legislature in parliamentary, semi-presidential, and presidential democracies. This literature is particularly well-developed for parliamentary democracies, and explores, for example, the factors that determine government stability and duration, which parties enter the cabinet and get ministerial portfolios, and whether different types of governments produce different policy outcomes. A smaller, but rapidly growing, literature looks at these types of questions in both semi-presidential and presidential regimes, and examines how the composition and behavior of the executive is affected by its relationship with the legislature. In addition to the work on government life cycles, we will address a related literature focusing on the relationship between domestic institutional arrangements and various kinds of democratic stability or economic outcomes. Variation in these domestic political arrangements also has implications for interactions between or among countries at the international level. Throughout the course, we will discuss the extent to which institutions, combined with the political context of different countries, produce outcomes (such as government or regime stability) that are of interest to political scientists.

Required Books:


In addition to the books listed above, we will read articles, book chapters, and unpublished manuscripts. Some additional ‘recommended readings’ are listed below each topic on the schedule. These are included as a preliminary (and non-exhaustive) guide for further reading.
Grading

Your final grade is a weighted average of the following components:

- Participation (50%).
  - All students are required to have completed the readings for each week before class begins, and everyone should be prepared to discuss the readings during class. I expect all students to provide evidence that they have done the readings in a thoughtful and careful manner. Not participating in class discussions, or participating but with a demonstrated inability to discuss the readings in detail, is an example of behavior that does not meet expectations and will be graded accordingly. You will also be called upon to offer feedback (written and oral) on the final papers of your colleagues at least a couple of points throughout the semester.

- Final Paper (50%).
  - The course will require a final paper that must be related to some aspect of the material covered during the semester. I construe the subject matter rather broadly; that is, the final paper must address some feature of democratic executives, legislatures, or the relationship between these two. I expect that a wide range of projects would comfortably fit this description. I am open to the idea that this could be an extension of a previous paper, or could be part of a larger project related to your MA thesis or dissertation proposal. Note that if you intend to hand in the paper for this class as well as a separate class, you will need explicit permission from both professors.

Schedule


Required Reading:
Recommended Reading:

January 20 – No class (Holiday in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.).

January 27 – Forming Governments.

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:


**February 3** – Paper proposal due.

**February 10** – Cabinet Portfolios and Executive Appointments.

*Required Reading:*


*Recommended Reading:*


**February 17 – Government Stability.**

*Required Reading:*

*Recommended Reading:*

**February 24 – Government Termination.**

*Required Reading:*
**Recommended Reading:**

**March 3 – Policy Outcomes (I).**

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Spring Break (No Class): March 10 - 14 **
March 17 – Regime Type, Parties, and Mandates.

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:


March 31 – Policy Outcomes (II).

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:
April 7 – Decentralization/Federalism.

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

April 14 – Coalitions and Economic Policy.

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

April 21 – Regime Type and Democratic Stability.

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

April 28 – Presentations of Final Projects.

PAPER DUE TUESDAY, MAY 6.
Additional Information

Academic Dishonesty
The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one’s work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.
All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor.
In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in class or take home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.
Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.
In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at: http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-Academic_Integrity/integrity.shtml

Disabilities
Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services. For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the Office for Disability Services (ODS) Web site at: www.equity.psu.edu/ods/ Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.