

COMPARATIVE ELECTIONS (CPO 4072)
SPRING 2026
PROFESSOR MORASKI

This document is a pre-semester (December 17) draft of the course syllabus. It is subject to changes. Students should rely on the syllabus available via Canvas.

I. General Information

3 credits

Meeting days, times and locations:

- Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Period 3 (9:35-10:25) – **E221 Computer Sciences/Engineering**

Instructor(s):

Name: Professor Bryon Moraski

Office: 313 Anderson Hall

Phone: 352-273-2631

Email: bmoraski@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00 pm or by appointment

Teaching Assistant(s):

Name: N/A

Office Building/Number:

Phone:

Email:

Office Hours:

Course Description

Elections can be critical junctures in political history. In democracies, they are opportunities for voters to express their level of satisfaction with government, and even authoritarian regimes may use elections as safety valves to release pent-up societal discontent. In all contexts, elections can function as rallying points for the opposition and to test the government's mettle. Ultimately, electoral outcomes may determine which societal interests have a voice in the corridors of political power and whether the current direction of politics continues. Yet elections operate differently, even among democracies, and the differences grant those in power a variety of rules to manipulate. Thus, the rules that govern elections may not only make the difference between winning and losing, but incumbent parties may also be tempted to alter the rules to solidify their electoral control. This course examines these various dynamics.

General Education Designation: None.

Course Materials

Required Reading

The required reading for the course comes from a variety of online book chapters, journal articles, and other electronic resources. Using scholarly journal articles and other electronic sources keeps the course content current as well as the costs of the material for the students to a minimum.

Required Technology

Students may need to use Zoom to attend office hours, Adobe Reader to access much of the assigned reading, and Turnitin.com to submit paper assignments.

Materials Fee: N/A

II. Course Goals

Course Objectives

Students will learn about the principal components of domestic politics in Russia and their evolution over time.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will understand:

- 1) how electoral rules shape the behavior of voters, politicians, and parties;
- 2) scholarly recommendations about which electoral options may advance the cause of democracy;
- 3) why and how elites manipulate electoral rules; and
- 4) how different contexts lead to different electoral outcomes.

III. Graded Work

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the [Catalog](#).

Graded Components

Assigned work is due via the mechanism specified, at the time specified; penalties for lateness will be provided on the assignments.

It is your responsibility to upload the correct documents to the right platform (e.g., Canvas, Google Assignments, Turnitin), depending on the assignment.

Final grades for the course will be based on the following:

1. Attendance, worth 10% of the final course grade

- I will take attendance at the beginning of each period.
- If students are late, it is their responsibility to make sure that they are not marked as absent. Students will not receive full credit for attendance on days that they are late.
- I require documentation to excuse an absence.
- Students are encouraged to review the University's attendance policies at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>

I reserve the right to remove students who disrupt the class or disrespect others in the class. In such instances, students should meet with me to discuss their behavior prior to returning to class.

Students will not receive attendance credit for the session in question or for any sessions missed while the issue is being resolved.

2. In-class exams, worth 90% of the final course grade

- Four exams will be administered throughout the semester.
 - Exams 1 and 2 are each worth 20% of the final course grade.
 - Exams 3 and 4 are each worth 25% of the final course grade.

Students who arrive late will have only the time between their arrival and the time initially allocated for the exam to complete the exam.

Make-up exams will be provided only for university-accepted excuses (e.g., not simply because a student is late). Make-up exams will be held during the second hour of the final exam periods scheduled by the Registrar's Office and will differ from the original.

****Participation**

- Students may earn up to 2.5 percent of the final class grade in **extra credit** over the course of the semester through class participation.
 - Quality matters.
 - Participation that is not related to the topic at hand or that illustrates a failure to prepare for class (i.e., complete the assigned reading) **does not count**.
 - The baseline for the participation grade will reflect the total number of opportunities provided to the class throughout the semester.
 - Since the opportunities for participation will vary from class to class, the only way to maximize your opportunities for participation is to attend every class.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	100-92.5
A-	92.4-89.5
B+	89.4-86.5

Letter Grade	Number Grade
B	86.4-82.5
B-	82.4-79.5
C+	79.4-76.5
C	76.4-72.5
C-	72.4-69.5
D+	69.4-66.5
D	66.4-62.5
D-	62.4-59.5
E	59.4-0

See the UF Catalog's "[Grades and Grading Policies](#)" for information on how UF assigns grade points.

Note: A minimum grade of C is required to earn General Education credit.

IV. Calendar

****Subject to Changes****

Week 1 (Jan 12-16) – The Soviet Experiment

Monday

- Course overview

Wednesday

- Flores, Thomas and Irfan Nooruddin. 2016. *Elections in Hard Times*, pp. 3-23

Friday

- Ware, Alan. 1995. *Political Parties and Party Systems*, pp. 147-175

Week 2 (Jan 19-23) – The End of Communist Russia

Monday, January 19 – No class (MLK Jr. Holiday)

Wednesday

- Katz, Richard S. and Peter Mair. 1995. "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party." *Party Politics* 1(1): 5-28

Friday

- Norris, Pippa. 2004. *Electoral Engineering*, Chapter 2

Week 3 (Jan 26-30) – Party Systems and Electoral Systems (continued)

Monday

- Norris, *Electoral Engineering*, Chapter 3
- Barkan, Joel D. 1995. "Elections in Agrarian Societies." *Journal of Democracy* 6(4): 106–116.

Wednesday

- Reynolds, Andrew. 1995. "The Case for Proportionality." *Journal of Democracy* 6(4): 117–124.

Friday

- Moser, Robert. 2001. *Unexpected Outcomes*, pp. 32-49.

Week 4 (Feb 2-6) – Elections and Participation

Monday

- Mainwaring, Scott. 1993. "Presidentialism, Multipartyism, and Democracy: The Difficult Combination." *Comparative Political Studies* 26(2): 198–228.

Wednesday, February 4 - Exam 1

Friday

- Franklin, *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies Since 1945*, pp. 9-31

Week 5 (Feb 9-13) – Elections and Representation

Monday

- Franklin, *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies Since 1945*, Chapter 8

Wednesday

- Caul, Miki. 1999. "Women's Representation in Parliament: The Role of Political Parties." *Party Politics* 5(1): 79–98.

Friday

- Bjarnegard, Elin. 2013. *Gender, Informal Institutions, and Political Recruitment: Explaining Male Dominance in Parliamentary Representation*. Chapter 7: "Concluding Remarks"

Week 6 (Feb 16-20) – Representation and Electoral Reform

Monday

- Donovan and Bowler. 2004. *Reforming the Republic: Democratic Institutions for the New America*, Chapter 4

Wednesday

- Stratmann, Thomas and Martin Baur. 2002. "Plurality Rule, Proportional Representation, and the German Bundestag: How Incentives to Pork-Barrel Differ across Electoral Systems." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(3): 506–14.

Friday

- Andrews, Josephine T. and Robert W. Jackman. 2005. "Strategic Fools: Electoral Rule Choice under Extreme Uncertainty." *Electoral Studies* 24(1): 65–84.

Week 7 (Feb 23-27) – Electoral Integrity and Regime Type

Monday

- Snyder, Richard and David Samuels. 2001. "Devaluing the Vote in Latin America." *Journal of Democracy* 12(1): 146–59.

Wednesday, February 25 - Exam 2

Friday

- Birch, Sarah. 2007. "Electoral Systems and Electoral Misconduct." *Comparative Political Studies* 40(12): 1533–56.

Week 8 (March 2-6) – Elections in Undemocratic Settings

Monday

- Schedler, "The Logic of Electoral Authoritarianism", pp. 1-15

Wednesday

- Howard, Marc Morje, and Philip G. Roessler. 2006. "Liberalizing Electoral Outcomes in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 365–81

Friday

- Klein, Aidan and Bryon Moraski. 2020. "Incentives to Deliver: Authoritarian Rule, Proportional Representation, and Support for Russia's Ruling Party." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties* 30(4): 524-41.

Week 9 (Mar 9-13) – Authoritarian Tactics and Constraints

Monday

- Case, "Manipulative Skills: How do Rulers Control the Electoral Arena?" (Chapter 6 in Schedler, ed.)

Wednesday

- Way, "Authoritarian Failure: How Does State Weakness Strengthen Electoral Competition?" (Chapter 10 in Schedler, ed.)

Friday

- Golosov, Grigorii. 2015. "Do Spoilers Make a Difference? Instrumental Manipulation of Political Parties in an Electoral Authoritarian Regime, the Case of Russia." *East European Politics* 31(2): 170-86.

Week 10 (Mar 16-20) – No Class (Spring Break)

Week 11 (Mar 23-27) – Incumbent Motivations and (Dis-)Incentives

Monday

- Watch "Bringing Down a Dictator" and answer the questions on Canvas.

Wednesday

- Thompson and Kuntz, "After Defeat: When Do Rulers Steal Elections?" (Chapter 7 in Schedler, ed.)

Friday

- Levitsky and Way, "Linkage and Leverage: How Do International Factors Change Domestic Balances of Power?" (Chapter 12 in Schedler, ed.)

Week 12 (Mar 30-Apr 3) – Options for the Opposition

Monday, March 30 - Exam 3

Wednesday

- Van de Walle, "Tipping Games: When Do Opposition Parties Coalesce" (Chapter 5 in Schedler, ed.)

Friday

- Tucker, Joshua. 2007. "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Colored Revolutions." *Perspectives on Politics* 5(3): 535-551.

Week 13 (Apr 6-10) – Election Boycotts and Election Monitoring

Monday

- Lindberg, "Tragic Protest: Why Do Opposition Parties Boycott Elections?" (Chapter 9 in Schedler, ed.)

Wednesday

- Smith, Ian O. 2014. "Election Boycotts and Hybrid Regime Survival." *Comparative Political Studies* 47: 743-65.

Friday

- Kelley, *Monitoring Democracy*, Chapter 7 "Are Monitored Elections Better?"

Week 14 (Apr 13-17) – Electoral Violence

Monday

- Bhasin, Tavishi and Jennifer Gandhi. 2013. "Timing and Targeting of State Repression in Authoritarian Elections." *Electoral Studies* 32(4): 620-31.

Wednesday

- Flores, Thomas and Irfan Nooruddin. 2016. *Elections in Hard Times*, Chapter 7 "Violent Votes: Conflict and Elections"

Friday

- Birch, Sarah and David Muchlinski. 2018. "Electoral Violence Prevention: What Works?" *Democratization* 25(3): 385-403.

Week 15 (Apr 20-22) -- Foreign Interference and Domestic Compliance

Monday

- Templeman, Kharis. 2020. "How Taiwan Stands Up to China." *Journal of Democracy* 31(3): 85-99.

Wednesday

- Chernykh, Svitlana. 2024. *The Dilemma of Compliance: Political Parties and Post-Election Disputes*, TBA

Finals Week (April 27 - May 1)

Exam 4: Wednesday, 04/29/26 29, 3:00-3:50 pm

Makeup Exams (if necessary): Wednesday, 04/29/26 29, 4:00-4:50 pm