

**POL GA 3550:
Distributive Politics in Advanced Democracies
Spring 2021
Tues 2-3.50pm
Room (when in person): 217, 19 West 4th St.**

In all democracies, governments make decisions about how to allocate valued goods and services to groups of voters. Most of the time, governments make these decisions with an eye to their electoral prospects. How widespread is this behavior in advanced democracies and what forms it takes? Does it vary systematically according to a country's political institutions? Does it mean that governments are responsive to voters, or can it create conditions under which voters have to be responsive to governments? Does it confer unfair advantages on the ruling party? How are sub-national politicians, firms, bureaucrats, and other special interests pulled into these distributive exchanges? This course introduces students to work on these questions that has had a large impact on the field or can be considered to be at the frontier. The focus is on research in the comparative politics field that has been conducted on advanced democracies outside of the United States.

The course has three main objectives. The first is to help students develop an appreciation of the questions that have occupied scholars in this area and why, and where the field is at with regard to those questions. Some findings have reached the status of a conventional wisdom, while others are newer and/or promise to open up exciting avenues of future research. To this end, three required readings have been assigned each week. Students are expected to read these articles carefully ahead of time and come to class prepared to discuss them. Discussion will focus on their substantive takeaways, as well as the processes through which the authors posed their questions, conducted their research, and drew their conclusions. Students are encouraged to be alert to ways in which arguments could be better constructed or empirical evidence better collected, marshaled, and analyzed. We will work to identify areas where there is potential for significant contributions to be made. To facilitate this, one-page Memos will be due the morning of each session, which will be circulated to all students and will include questions for discussion.

The second objective is to help students develop an appreciation of what it takes to generate high-quality research and writing in comparative politics. By reading and critiquing the material in each week, the course aims to equip students with the foundational knowledge and analytical skills required to come up with their own questions, craft their own contributions, implement their own cutting-edge empirical analysis, and ultimately produce papers publishable in top comparative politics journals. To this end, a large portion of the assessment is a final research paper or a research design paper. Students are encouraged to choose their topics upon consultation with the Instructor.

The third objective is to expand upon the arsenal of more practical skills students need to complete dissertations in comparative politics and carve out careers as comparative politics scholars. To this end, assessment includes two referee reports and two presentations. In selected sessions, we will devote time to questions such as how to choose a dissertation topic, whether to do a three-paper or book-type dissertation, how to write, how to put together a dissertation committee, how to organize one's workflow, how to establish oneself in a community of scholars, how to apply to conferences, how to present one's work, how to prepare discussant slides, and how to serve as a journal referee.

Instructor:

Amy Catalinac

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Office: 315, 19 West 4th St.

Office Hours: Wed 10am-12pm.

Course Requirements:

1. Participation (Discussion, Memos and Presentations) (30%)

Your participation is an integral part of this course. You are expected to come to class each week having carefully read and engaged with the required readings ahead of time. Sessions will consist of in-depth discussion of all three readings. Discussion will focus on grasping the material's contribution to comparative politics, as well as considering questions such as how it could have been improved and how it could be fruitfully extended, to other settings or policy outcomes.

To facilitate this, you are expected to submit a one-page Memo by 8am the morning of each class, which will be circulated to other students. The Memo should not summarize the material, but offer a commentary or critique of one or more (non-methodological) aspects of the material in a way that stimulates discussion.

In addition, you are expected to prepare two presentations, pertaining to two *different* weeks of your choice (one must be delivered before March 9 and the other, by April 6). These presentations, of no more than 20 minutes, will be delivered in the style of discussant comments at a conference. Typically, such a presentation begins with a synthesis of the readings, which explains how they hang together and what broader questions, if any, they may collectively be trying to get at. Then, it moves on to each in turn, offering comments on aspects of the paper that were convincing and less convincing, and offering suggestions for improvement or areas of extension.

2. Two Referee Reports (20%)

You are also expected to write two referee reports, each pertaining to one reading in two different weeks (the first of these must be completed by March 9 and the other, by April 6). These are due via email on the Monday of the week in which we are discussing that reading in class.

In your referee report, you are to treat the article as if it had been submitted to a journal and you have been asked to review it. You will need to read it thoroughly and you may also need to acquaint yourself with other literature in that area. Your report should evaluate

the contribution of the paper and the methodological rigor with which the goals it set were achieved. You will need to assess the paper's weaknesses (whether in contribution, substance, or methodological rigor) and decide whether you believe the author should be offered the opportunity to address those weaknesses or whether they constitute a hurdle too large to overcome. In composing your report, it may be useful to consult referee instructions issued by general comparative politics journals.

3. Final Paper (50%)

You are also expected to write a final paper. This paper is not intended as a tiresome hoop through which you have to jump, but as an integral part of the portfolio of work you will develop during your time as a graduate student. To this end, the paper can be on any comparative politics topic of interest. Ideally, students will use the course as an opportunity to produce the first draft of something that could, after more time and effort has been expended, become a published paper of comparable quality to one of the articles we have read. Note that finding a precise, relevant, challenging, yet feasible substantive question is one of the most difficult tasks facing any political scientist. Students are encouraged to begin thinking about their final paper immediately, guided by their substantive interests, intuitions and background knowledge, as well as the talents they will bring to bear on the work, all of which will need to be exploited to the fullest extent. Students should set themselves the very-highest standards and find topics upon which they are prepared to make a substantial investment of time, effort and creative energy.

I am open to the following two types of final papers:

- The first draft of a *research article* akin to those we read in the course. Research articles usually aim to break new ground theoretically, empirically, or both. They can bring new data to bear on an old question. They can pose a new question and show how old theories can be used (or adapted) to answer them. Research articles are not purely theoretical papers, nor are they purely descriptive (describing a particular phenomena or political system). Typically, research articles will involve the collection and analysis of new data, or new methodologies applied to existing data. The instructor understands that any research articles written within the confines of the course will need more work before they are publishable.
- A *research design paper*, intended to become a prospectus. This lays out the research question, motivates this question (ideally, with real-world examples), lays out the relevant literature (remember, you will sometimes need to decide *what* the literature would say about *your* research question), offers your theory and hypotheses, and offers a plan for empirically testing this, whether with observational or experimental data, on one or more countries.

Regardless of type, your paper should include the following:

- (a) Motivation: why is answering your question important?
- (b) Background/context: have other people already tried to answer this question? If so, what theories have they drawn on, what answers have they given, and why are those answers invalid or incomplete? Why is more work on this question needed?

- (c) Theoretical expectations/hypotheses: describe your own theory/theoretical approach. Use this to deduce precise empirical observations or hypotheses that can be tested with data.
- (d) Data: consider the kind of data that would provide the very best test of your hypotheses, if you had access to it. If such data are unavailable (as is usually the case), consider whether other data sets could provide a credible test of your hypotheses. If no suitable data exists, specify a feasible research project that would enable you to gather the required evidence.
- (e) Method/analysis: draw clear inferences about what your data tell you about your hypotheses and thus about the research question that motivates your project.
- (f) Conclusion: What conclusions have you been able to draw from your research? Under what conditions might your conclusions not be warranted? What relevance do your conclusions hold for existing work in the field? Has your research raised new questions for others to answer?

Your paper should be between 25-30 pages double-spaced. It is due via email on Friday, May 14 and will count for 50% of your grade. Note that you are expected to meet with the Instructor through the semester about your paper, and the Instructor may ask you to write up sections of it as you go along. Please consult the [NYU Citation Guide](#) for information about the referencing style you will need to use, which is the Chicago author-date system, and for general information on how to properly cite sources.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation (Discussion, Memos and Presentations)	30%
Two Referee Reports	20%
Final paper	50%

Important Dates:

Class Begins	February 2
(At Least) One Referee Report Due	March 9
(At Least) One Presentation Due	March 9
Second Referee Report Due	April 6
Second Presentation Due	April 6
Final Paper Due	May 14

COURSE OUTLINE

February 2: Introduction

This is an organizational meeting. We will go over the goals of the course and assign referee reports and presentation weeks. Please look over the syllabus carefully to identify weeks you would like to provide a referee report for and present in. There is no assigned reading.

February 9: Studying Distributive Politics

Eric Kramon and Daniel N Posner. Who Benefits From Distributive Politics? How the Outcome One Studies Affects the Answer One Gets. *Perspectives on Politics*, pages 461–474, 2013.

Michael Albertus. Theory and Methods in the Study of Distributive Politics. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 7(3):629–639, 2019.

Susan C. Stokes, Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno, and Valeria Brusco. What’s Wrong with Buying Votes? In *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics*, page 245–260. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Thomas B Pepinsky. The Return of the Single-Country Study. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22:187–203, 2019.

Background:

Miriam Golden and Brian Min. Distributive Politics Around the World. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16, 2013.

Adam Przeworski. Institutions matter? *Government and Opposition*, 39(4):527–540, September 2004.

Adam Przeworski. Is the Science of Comparative Politics Possible? In Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, editors, *The Oxford handbook of Comparative Politics*. 2009.

Charles Lees. We Are All Comparativists Now: Why and How Single-Country Scholarship Must Adapt and Incorporate the Comparative Politics Approach. *Comparative Political Studies*, 39(9):1084–1108, 2006.

February 16: Which Voters are Targeted and Why?

Gary W Cox. Swing Voters, Core Voters, and Distributive Politics. *Political representation*, 342, 2009.

Simeon Nichter. Vote Buying or Turnout Buying? Machine Politics and the Secret Ballot. *American Political Science Review*, pages 19–31, 2008.

Agustín Casas. Distributive Politics with Vote and Turnout Buying. *The American Political Science Review*, 112(4):1111–1119, 2018.

Background:

Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins. Electoral Politics as a Redistributive Game. *The Journal of Politics*, 48(2):370–389, 1986.

Assar Lindbeck and Jörgen W Weibull. Balanced-budget redistribution as the outcome of political competition. *Public choice*, 52(3):273–297, 1987.

Avinash Dixit and John Londregan. The Determinants of Success of Special Interests in Redistributive Politics. *Journal of Politics*, 58:1132–55, 1996.

Susan C Stokes. Perverse Accountability: A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence From Argentina. *American Political Science Review*, pages 315–325, 2005.

Matz Dahlberg and Eva Johansson. On the Vote-purchasing Behavior of Incumbent Governments. *American Political Science Review*, pages 27–40, 2002.

Frederico Finan and Laura Schechter. Vote-buying and Reciprocity. *Econometrica*, 80(2):863–881, 2012.

Yusaku Horiuchi and Seungjoo Lee. The Presidency, Regionalism, and Distributive Politics in South Korea. *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(6):861–882, 2008.

Jordan Gans-Morse, Sebastian Mazzuca, and Simeon Nichter. Varieties of Clientelism: Machine Politics During Elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(2):415–432, 2014.

February 23: Role of Electoral Systems

Fiona McGillivray. *Privileging Industry: The Comparative Politics of Trade and Industrial Policy*. Princeton University Press, 2004. Chapter 1.

Patricia Funk and Christina Gathmann. How Do Electoral Systems Affect Fiscal Policy? Evidence from Cantonal Parliaments, 1890–2000. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 11(5):1178–1203, 2013.

Stephanie J Rickard. Electoral Systems, Voters' Interests and Geographic Dispersion. *British Journal of Political Science*, pages 855–877, 2012.

Background:

Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini. Electoral Systems and Economic Policy. *Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, pages 1–17, 2008.

Gian Maria Milesi-Ferretti, Roberto Perotti, and Massimo Rostagno. Electoral Systems and Public Spending. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117(2):609–657, 2002.

John M Carey and Matthew Soberg Shugart. Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas. *Electoral studies*, 14(4):417–439, 1995.

Thomas Stratmann and Martin Baur. Plurality Rule, Proportional Representation, and the German Bundestag: How Incentives to Pork-barrel Differ Across Electoral Systems. *American Journal of Political Science*, pages 506–514, 2002.

Stephanie J Rickard. Strategic Targeting: the Effect of Institutions and Interests on Distributive Transfers. *Comparative Political Studies*, 42(5):670–695, 2009.

Torsten Persson and Guido Enrico Tabellini. *The Economic Effects of Constitutions*. MIT press, 2005.

March 2: Targeting in Majoritarian Electoral Systems

David Denmark. Partisan Pork Barrel in Parliamentary Systems: Australian Constituency-level Grants. *Journal of Politics*, 62(3):896–915, 2000.

Hugh Ward and Peter John. Targeting Benefits for Electoral Gain: Constituency Marginality and the Distribution of Grants to English Local Authorities. *Political Studies*, 47(1):32–52, 1999.

Shigeo Hirano. Electoral Institutions, Hometowns, and Favored Minorities: Evidence from Japanese Electoral Reforms. *World Politics*, 58:51–82, October 2006.

Background:

Alexander Fourniaies and Hande Mutlu-Eren. English Bacon: Copartisan Bias in Intergovernmental Grant Allocation in England. *The Journal of Politics*, 77(3):805–817, 2015.

March 9: Targeting Under Proportional Representation?

Margit Tavits. Geographically-Targeted Spending: Exploring the Electoral Strategies of Incumbent Governments. *European Political Science Review*, 1(1):103–123, 2009.

Miriam A. Golden and Lucio Picci. Pork-Barrel Politics in Postwar Italy, 1953-94. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(2):268–289, 2008.

Stephanie J. Rickard. *Spending to Win: Political Institutions, Economic Geography, and Government Subsidies*. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 2018. Chapter 6.

Background:

Barry Ames. Electoral strategy under open-list proportional representation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(2):406–433, 1995.

Brian F Crisp and Scott W Desposato. Constituency Building in Multimember Districts: Collusion or Conflict? *The Journal of Politics*, 66(1):136–156, 2004.

Jon H Fiva and Askill H Halse. Local Favoritism in At-large Proportional Representation Systems. *Journal of Public Economics*, 143:15–26, 2016.

Stephanie J. Rickard. *Spending to Win: Political Institutions, Economic Geography, and Government Subsidies*. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 2018. Chapter 7.

March 16: Clientelism and Vote Buying in Advanced Democracies?

Susan C. Stokes, Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno, and Valeria Brusco. Between Clients and Citizens: Puzzles and Concepts in the Study of Distributive Politics. In *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics*, pages 3–27. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Allen Hicken and Noah L. Nathan. Clientelism’s Red Herrings: Dead Ends and New Directions in the Study of Nonprogrammatic Politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 23(1):277–294, 2020.

Miriam A Golden, Eugenia Nazrullaeva, and Stephane Wolton. Politics in Poor Places? Clientelism and Elections in Democracies. *Working Paper*, 2020.

Background:

Isabela Mares and Lauren Young. Buying, Expropriating, and Stealing Votes. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 19:267–288, 2016.

Susan C Stokes. Political Clientelism. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. 2007.

March 23: Modalities of Clientelism in Advanced Democracies

Sanford C. Gordon and Hannah K. Simpson. The Birth of Pork: Local Appropriations in America's First Century. *American Political Science Review*, 112(3):564–579, 2018.

Mauro Caselli and Paolo Falco. Your Vote is (No) Secret! How Low Voter Density Harms Voter Anonymity and Biases Elections in Italy. EconPol Working Paper 26, Leibniz Institute for Economic Research at the University of Munich, 2019.

Amy Catalinac, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, and Alastair Smith. A Tournament Theory of Pork Barrel Politics: The Case of Japan. *Comparative Political Studies*, 0(0), 2019.

Background:

Chin-Shou Wang and Charles Kurzman. The Logistics: How to Buy Votes. In Fred-eric Charles Schaffer, editor, *Elections for Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying*, pages 61–78. Lynne Rienner Boulder, CO, 2007.

Gary W Cox and J Morgan Kousser. Turnout and Rural Corruption: New York as a Test Case. *American Journal of Political Science*, pages 646–663, 1981.

Susan C. Stokes, Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno, and Valeria Brusco. What Killed Vote Buying in Britain and the United States? In *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics*, pages 200–242. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

March 30: Federalism and Centralization

Erik Wibbels. Madison in Baghdad?: Decentralization and Federalism in Comparative Politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 9(1):165–188, 2006.

Edmund J Malesky, Cuong Viet Nguyen, and Anh Tran. The Impact of Recentralization on Public Services: A Difference-in-differences Analysis of the Abolition of Elected Councils in Vietnam. *American Political Science Review*, pages 144–168, 2014.

Ethan Scheiner. Pipelines of Pork: A Model of Local Opposition Party Failure. *Comparative Political Studies*, 38:799–823, 2005.

Background:

Vladimir Gimpelson and Daniel Treisman. Fiscal Games and Public Employment: a Theory with Evidence From Russia. *World Politics*, pages 145–183, 2002.

Jonathan A. Rodden. Fiscal Federalism and Bailouts in Postwar Germany. In *Hamilton's Paradox: The Promise and Peril of Fiscal Federalism*, pages 153–187. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Allen Hicken. How Do Rules and Institutions Encourage Vote Buying? In Fred-eric Charles Schaffer, editor, *Elections for Sale: The Causes and Consequences of Vote Buying*, pages 47–60. Lynne Rienner Boulder, CO, 2007.

Ernesto Calvo and Maria Victoria Murillo. Who Delivers? Partisan Clients in the Argentine Electoral Market. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(4):742–757, 2004.

Sanford C Gordon and Woo Chang Kang. Distributive politics: Federal outlays. *Emerg- ing Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, pages 1–16, 2015.

Tiberiu Dragu and Jonathan Rodden. Representation and Redistribution in Federations. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108(21):8601–8604, 2011.

April 6: Election Timing

Petra Schleiter and Margit Tavits. The Electoral Benefits of Opportunistic Election Timing. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(3):836–850, 2016.

Max Goplerud and Petra Schleiter. An Index of Assembly Dissolution Powers. *Com- parative Political Studies*, 49(4):427–456, 2016.

David Fortunato, Matt W Loftis, et al. Cabinet durability and fiscal discipline. *American Political Science Review*, 112(4):939–953, 2018.

Background:

Alastair Smith. Election Timing in Majoritarian Parliaments. *British Journal of Political Science*, pages 397–418, 2003.

April 13: Political Budget Cycles

James E Alt and David Dreyer Lassen. Transparency, Political Polarization, and Po- litical Budget Cycles in OECD Countries. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3):530–550, 2006.

Thushyanthan Baskaran, Adi Brender, Sebastian Blesse, and Yaniv Reingewertz. Rev- enue Decentralization, Central Oversight and the Political Budget Cycle: Evidence from Israel. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 42:1–16, 2016.

Kentaro Fukumoto, Yusaku Horiuchi, and Shoichiro Tanaka. Treated Politicians, Treated Voters: A Natural Experiment on Political Budget Cycles. *Electoral Studies*, 67:102206, 2020.

Background:

William D Nordhaus. The Political Business Cycle. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 42(2):169–190, 1975.

Robert J Franzese Jr. Electoral and Partisan Cycles in Economic Policies and Outcomes. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 5(1):369–421, 2002.

Brandice Canes-Wrone and Jee-Kwang Park. Electoral Business Cycles in OECD Countries. *American Political Science Review*, pages 103–122, 2012.

Woo Chang Kang. Electoral Cycles in Pork Barrel Politics: Evidence from South Korea 1989–2008. *Electoral Studies*, 38:46–58, 2015.

Oleg Sidorkin and Dmitriy Vorobyev. Political cycles and corruption in Russian regions. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 52:55 – 74, 2018.

Joachim Wehner. Electoral Budget Cycles in Legislatures. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 38(4):545–570, 2013.

Christoph Garwe, Benjamin G. Engst, Yannick G. Stawicki, and Christoph Hönnige. Temporal strategies: Governments alter the pace of legislation in bicameralism depending on electoral expectations. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 2021.

April 20: Special Interests, Business, and Bureaucracy

Miriam A Golden. Electoral Connections: The Effects of the Personal Vote on Political Patronage, Bureaucracy and Legislation in Postwar Italy. *British Journal of Political Science*, pages 189–212, 2003.

Andrew C Eggers and Jens Hainmueller. MPs for Sale? Returns to Office in Postwar British Politics. *American Political Science Review*, pages 513–533, 2009.

Jonas Markgraf and Guillermo Rosas. On Board with Banks: Do Banking Connections Help Politicians Win Elections? *The Journal of Politics*, 81(4):1357–1370, 2019.

Background:

Isabela Mares and Boliang Zhu. The Production of Electoral Intimidation: Economic and Political Incentives. *Comparative Politics*, 48(1):23–41, 2015.

Megumi Naoi and Ellis Krauss. Who Lobbies Whom? Special Interest Politics under Alternative Electoral Systems. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(4):874–892, 2009.

Didi Kuo. *Clientelism, Capitalism, and Democracy: The Rise of Programmatic Politics in the United States and Britain*. Cambridge University Press, 2018. Chapter 3.

David Szakonyi. Businesspeople in Elected Office: Identifying Private Benefits from Firm-Level Returns. *American Political Science Review*, 112(2):322–338, 2018.

April 27: Sub-national Actors

Anthony M Bertelli and Peter John. Government Checking Government: How Performance Measures Expand Distributive Politics. *The Journal of Politics*, 72(2):545–558, 2010.

Balázs Muraközy and Álmos Telegdy. Political Incentives and State Subsidy Allocation: Evidence from Hungarian Municipalities. *European Economic Review*, 89:324 – 344, 2016.

Michael Albertus. The Role of Subnational Politicians in Distributive Politics: Political Bias in Venezuela’s Land Reform Under Chávez. *Comparative Political Studies*, 48(13):1667–1710, 2015.

Background:

Isabela Mares and Lauren E Young. *Conditionality & Coercion: Electoral Clientelism in Eastern Europe*. Oxford University Press, 2019. Chapter 4.

Daniel Treisman. The Politics of Intergovernmental Transfers in Post-Soviet Russia. *British Journal of Political Science*, pages 299–335, 1996.

Horacio Larreguy, John Marshall, and Pablo Querubin. Parties, Brokers, and Voter Mobilization: How Turnout Buying Depends upon the Party’s Capacity to Monitor Brokers. *American Political Science Review*, 110(1):160–179, 2016.

Alisha C Holland. The Distributive Politics of Enforcement. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(2):357–371, 2015.

May 4: Redistribution and Globalization

Charlotte Cavaille and Jeremy Ferwerda. How Distributional Conflict over In-Kind Benefits Generates Support for Far-Right Parties. *Working paper*, 2021.

Megumi Naoi. *Voting With the Wallet: Consumers, Income-Earners, and the New Politics of Globalization Backlash*. Book-in-Progress, 2021. Chapters 1, 8.

Background:

John D. Huber and Michael M. Ting. Redistribution, Pork, and Elections. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 11(6):1382–1403, 2013.
