Course Description: This class examines the roles that a wide range of political institutions play in different parts of the world, in both theoretical and empirical terms.

The first part of the course covers a series of theoretical and conceptual approaches to the study of institutions in Political Science. In this section we will address questions like: What are institutions? What functions do they fulfill? How and why are they created? How do they relate to individual preferences and behaviors?

Next, we take a more nuanced view and investigate differences between formal and informal institutions, between institutions in democratic and non-democratic regimes, and between institutions and social networks.

Finally, we focus on the empirical study of a particular set of institutions that are closely related to each other: electoral systems, party systems, political parties, and legislatures. Our goals for this part of the class are three-fold: first, to learn about particular institutional arrangements, how they are connected, how they function, and how they affect political processes and outcomes; second, to gain familiarity with some of the key pieces of research on each subject; and finally, to tie these empirical studies to the theoretical premises laid out in the first part of the class.

This is a 3 credit, graduate class. The credit hours are met during one weekly 115 minute face-to-face class meeting and a minimum of 230 additional minutes spent preparing ahead of time and working on the class assignments.

Over the course of the semester, you will become familiar with different institutional theories and their application, as well as examples of research using an institutionalist lense. You will
also relate and apply the materials to your own area of interest by writing a research paper or research design (details below) as your final project for the course.

**Assignments:**

1. Completing your readings (all of which are available on our Canvas course website), regular attendance, and active participation in class.
2. Weekly response/discussion papers (2-3 double-spaced pages max.) on the readings. In these papers, I am not looking for summaries of the readings, but for thoughtful engagement with the material. At the end, please include 2-3 discussion questions. The grade for these papers will be the average of the ten best grades, meaning that you may turn in as many discussion papers as you want, but a minimum of ten if you want full credit. Missing discussion papers will be graded as failed, and you may not skip any of the papers on the readings for weeks 2-5. Discussion papers are due to me via email at 11am on the day before our class meeting.
3. Short development paper (9-12 pages): by October 24, you will prepare a short paper that takes the required readings as a point of departure and develops a research agenda and/or a preliminary empirical investigation focusing on your area of interest. This assignment is a first step toward your final paper.
4. Final paper (25-30 pages): for your final paper, you will either write an original research paper or a carefully constructed research design. This paper is due on Saturday, December 14, 2019.

   a. *Original research paper:* ideally, I would like for you to write complete research papers that you could present at a professional conference or send out to a journal. Note that I am open to letting you further develop a work in progress, as long as it is explicitly concerned with political institutions and/or adopts an institutionalist perspective. If you want to take this route, please come see me as soon as possible to discuss your project.

   b. *Research design:* you may write a research design as your final paper, ideally with the intent to actually conduct the necessary research at a later point in time. Again, this research would have to be concerned with political institutions and/or adopt an institutionalist perspective.

Please think of this assignment as more than a mere “term paper” with little relevance for your careers and view it as an opportunity for your professional development. You should aim for every paper you write in a Political Science Ph.D. program to become a conference paper or a published article. This class will be a good place to start, continue, or finalize such a project.

**Grading:**

- Participation: 20%
- Weekly response papers: 20%
- Short development paper: 20%
- Final paper: 40%
Diversity and Inclusion: Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. https://diversity.wisc.edu/

Academic Integrity: By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/syllabus-statement/

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. https://mcburney.wisc.edu/instructor/


**September 12: Rational Choice Institutionalism.**


**September 19: Sociological, Normative, and Discursive Institutionalism.**


**September 26: Historical Institutionalism.**


**October 3: Crossing the Line (or trying to…)**


October 10: Informal Institutions.


October 17: Political Institutions in Non-Democratic Regimes.


October 24: Institutions and Social Networks.


October 31: Electoral Systems (*class to be rescheduled; I’m traveling…*)


November 7: Party Systems.


Mudde, Cas. 2014. “Fighting the system? Populist radical right parties and party system change.” Party Politics 20(2) 217–226


November 14: Political Parties (visitor: Jae-Jae Spoon, University of Pittsburgh)


Lupu, Noam and Rachel Beatty Riedl. 2012. Political Parties and Uncertainty in Developing Democracies. Comparative Political Studies 46(11), 1339–1365


**November 21: Legislatures.**


**December 5: Paper Presentations**