

# PS 948: Democratic Imperfections

Department of Political Science  
University of Wisconsin–Madison  
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Spring 2022

Class times: Mondays, 1:20–3:15pm  
Class location: 422 North Hall (the Ogg Room)  
Class website: [canvas.wisc.edu/courses/291092](https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/291092)

Office hours: Thursdays, 9–11am  
(Sign up at [calendly.com/rikhil/](https://calendly.com/rikhil/))  
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## COVID

Please consult [covidresponse.wisc.edu](https://covidresponse.wisc.edu) for current campus health and safety guidance.

## Course overview

Democracies frequently depart from their textbook ideal. We focus on select problems with democracy, and examine their causes and effects, and remedies for them. Topics vary from year-to-year and include inequalities in political representation and participation, state capacity, accountability, and ethnic voting. This year's class will focus on (1) inequalities in political participation and representation, and (2) state capacity. We will focus on the cutting edge of the empirical literature on these topics and will pay close attention to issues of measurement and causal inference.

## Instructional mode

Face-to-face.

## Learning outcomes

Gain an awareness of the cutting edge of the empirical literatures on inequalities in political participation and representation, and state capacity. Develop an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary research designs. Learn how to replicate existing empirical work and write journal reviews. Be able to develop theoretically grounded and testable hypotheses, and to formulate and implement compelling research designs to evaluate hypotheses.

## Course credits

This is a three-credit class. The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities, which include class meetings of two hours each week, multiple instructor-student meetings over the course of the semester, reading, data collection, analysis, writing, etc.

## Assignments and grading

The class grade will be based on:

1. Active, informed class participation, for 15% of the class grade. Participants are expected to have read assigned works closely, and reflected on them, including possibly by discussing them with their colleagues before class.
2. An in-class presentation summarizing and critiquing the readings for a week, for 15% of the class grade. A PDF of the presentation should be uploaded to Canvas before class. A sign-up sheet for presentations will be circulated in the first class.
3. A replication of any recently published paper on the syllabus, for 15% of the class grade. The replication should consist of all the data and code (in R or STATA) used to duplicate and extend the results of the paper, and a brief (2–3 single-spaced pages, excluding tables and figures) memo outlining the findings. Students should duplicate the key tables and figures in the paper, and should extend the results by checking for robustness, including, as appropriate, by using alternative estimators, analyzing heterogeneous treatment effects, examining other observable implications, using new data, etc. All replication materials should be placed in a folder with your last name and uploaded to the class Box folder no later than one week after the paper has been discussed in class. This is a time intensive assignment, so please start early.
4. A referee report, for 15% of the class grade. These must be written on one of the unpublished readings, and should be posted on Canvas by 8pm the day before the reading is discussed. The report should be 1–3 single-spaced pages, and should start a short appreciative paragraph (i.e., not a page or two) summarizing the work. See [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) for advice on how to write a referee report.
5. A 20–25 page research paper or paper and its presentation, for 40% of the class grade. Students should discuss their topics with me once by week 6, and a second time by week 11. Papers are due on Canvas one week after the last class, on 5/9. The paper will be graded on the questions posed, theory, hypotheses and research design, and not the statistical significance of preliminary results.

All assignments will be given one of the following letter grades: A, AB, B, BC, C, D and F. To calculate the final letter grade, these grades will be converted to numeric scores ( $A = 96.5$ ,  $AB = 90.5$ ,  $B = 85.5$ ,  $BC = 80.5$ ,  $C = 74.5$ ,  $D = 68$ ,  $F = 63$ ), which will then be summed using the weights mentioned above. The total score will be converted to the final letter grade using the following scale:  $93 \leq A \leq 100$ ,  $88 \leq AB < 93$ ,  $83 \leq B < 88$ ,  $78 \leq BC < 83$ ,  $71 \leq C < 78$ ,  $65 \leq D < 71$ , and  $0 \leq F < 65$ .

## **Rules, rights & responsibilities**

See <http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/>.

## **Course evaluations**

You will receive an official email two weeks prior to the end of the semester when your course evaluation is available. You will receive a link to log into the course evaluation with your NetID where you can complete the evaluation and submit it, anonymously. Your feedback is important to me.

## **Academic calendar and religious observances**

See <https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances>.

## **Academic integrity**

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW–Madison’s community of scholars in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to <http://studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>.

## **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 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. I, will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center (at 1305 Linden Drive and 608.263.2741; see [www.mcburney.wisc.edu](http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu)) 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.

## **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, back-

ground, 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.

## Course Schedule

### ***Part I. Inequalities in Political Representation and Participation***

#### **Class 1 (1/31): Causes—Economic Inequality**

Bartels, Larry M. 2008. *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Brunner, Eric, Stephen L. Ross, and Ebonya Washington. 2013. “Does Less Income Mean Less Representation?” *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 5(2):53–76.

Dal Bó, Ernesto, Frederico Finan, Olle Folke, Torsten Persson, and Johanna Rickne. 2017. “Who Becomes a Politician?” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 132(4):1877–1914.

Kasara, Kimuli, and Pavithra Suryanarayan. 2015. “When do the rich vote less than the poor and why? Explaining turnout inequality across the world.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59(3):613–627.

Lupu, Noam, and Zach Warner. 2022. “Why are the affluent better represented around the world?” *European Journal of Political Research* 61(1):67–85.

#### **Class 2 (2/7): Causes—Voter Discrimination**

Broockman, David E, and Evan J Soltas. 2020. “A Natural Experiment on Taste-Based Racial and Ethnic Discrimination in Elections.” *Journal of Public Economics* 188:104201.

Gaikwad, Nikhar, and Gareth Nellis. 2021. “Do politicians discriminate against internal migrants? Evidence from nationwide field experiments in India.” *American Journal of Political Science* 65(4):790–806.

Sen, Maya, and Omar Wasow. 2016. “Race as a bundle of sticks: Designs that estimate effects of seemingly immutable characteristics.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 19:499–522.

Stephens-Davidowitz, Seth. 2014. “The cost of racial animus on a black candidate: Evidence using Google search data.” *Journal of Public Economics* 118:26–40.

Teele, Dawn, Joshua L Kalla, and Frances McCall Rosenbluth. 2017. “Faces of Bias in Politics: Evidence from Elite and Voter Conjoint Experiments on Gender.”

#### **Class 3 (2/14): Effects—Democratization**

Acharya, Avidit, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. 2018. *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics*. Princeton University Press.

Fujiwara, Thomas. 2015. “Voting Technology, Political Responsiveness, and Infant Health: Evidence from Brazil.” *Econometrica* 83(2):423–464.

Kudamatsu, Masayuki. 2012. “Has Democratization Reduced Infant Mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa? Evidence from Micro Data.” *Journal of the European Economic Association* 10(6):1294–1317.

Miller, Grant. 2008. “Women’s Suffrage, Political Responsiveness, and Child Survival in American History.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123(3):1287–327.

Paglayan, Agustina S. 2021. “The Non-democratic Roots of Mass Education: Evidence from 200 years.” *American Political Science Review* 115(1):179–198.

#### **Class 4 (2/21): Effects—The Value of a Vote**

Ansolabehere, Stephen, Alan Gerber, and James Snyder. 2002. “Equal Votes, Equal Money: Court-Ordered Redistricting and Public Expenditures in the American States.” *American Political Science Review* 96(4):767–77.

Beramendi, Pablo, Soomin Oh, and Melissa Rogers. 2019. “Economic Geography and Redistribution: Malapportionment as Compensation.” Working paper.

Bhavnani, Rikhil R. 2021. “The Effects of Malapportionment on Economic Development: Evidence from India’s 2008 Redistricting.” *PLoS ONE* 16(12):e0259150.

Daxecker, Ursula. 2020. “Unequal Votes, Unequal Violence: Malapportionment and Election Violence in India.” *Journal of Peace Research* 57(1):156–170.

Harada, Masataka, and Daniel M. Smith. 2021. “Distributive Politics and Crime.” Working paper.

#### **Class 5 (2/28): Remedies—Altering Participation**

Avis, Eric, Claudio Ferraz, Frederico Finan, and Carlos Varjão. 2017. “Money and Politics: The Effects of Campaign Spending Limits on Political Competition and Incumbency Advantage.” National Bureau of Economic Research.

Cepaluni, Gabriel, and F Daniel Hidalgo. 2016. “Compulsory Voting Can Increase Political Inequality: Evidence from Brazil.” *Political Analysis* 24(2):273–80.

George, Siddharth, Sarika Gupta, and Yusuf Neggers. 2018. “Can We Text Criminal Politicians Out of Office? Evidence from a Mobile Experiment in India.” Working paper.

Gottlieb, Jessica. 2016. “Greater Expectations: A Field Experiment to Improve Accountability in Mali.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60(1):143–157.

Neggers, Yusuf. 2018. “Enfranchising Your Own? Experimental Evidence on Bureaucrat Diversity and Election Bias in India.” *American Economic Review* 108(6):1288–321.

## **Class 6 (3/7): Remedies—Electoral Quotas**

Besley, Timothy, Olle Folke, Torsten Persson, and Johanna Rickne. 2017. “Gender quotas and the crisis of the mediocre man: Theory and evidence from Sweden.” *American Economic Review* 107(8):2204–42.

Bush, Sarah Sunn, and Pär Zetterberg. 2021. “Gender Quotas and International Reputation.” *American Journal of Political Science* 65(2):326–341.

Dunning, Thad, and Janhavi Nilekani. 2013. “Ethnic Quotas and Political Mobilization: Caste, Parties, and Distribution in Indian Village Councils.” *American Political Science Review* 107(1):35–56.

O’Connell, Stephen. 2020. “Can Quotas Increase the Supply of Candidates for Higher-Level Positions? Evidence from Local Government in India.” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 102(1):65–78.

Pande, Rohini. 2003. “Can Mandated Political Representation Increase Policy Influence for Disadvantaged Minorities? Theory and Evidence from India.” *American Economic Review* 93(4):1132–51.

## ***Part II. State Capacity***

### **Class 7 (3/21): The Origins of State Capacity**

Dincecco, Mark, James Fenske, Anil Menon, and Shivaji Mukherjee. Forthcoming. “Pre-colonial warfare and long-run development in India.” *The Economic Journal*.

Suryanarayan, Pavithra and Steven White. 2021. “Slavery, reconstruction, and bureaucratic capacity in the American south.” *American Political Science Review* 115(2):568–584.

Tilly, Charles. 1993. *Coercion, Capital, and European States, A.D. 990-1992*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Wang, Yuhua. Forthcoming. “Blood Is Thicker Than Water: Elite Kinship Networks and State Building in Imperial China.” *American Political Science Review*.

Zhang, Nan, and Melissa M. Lee. 2020. “Literacy and State–Society Interactions in Nineteenth-Century France.” *American Journal of Political Science* 64(4):1001–1016.

### **Class 8 (3/28): The Developmental State**

Bianchi, Nicola, and Michela Giorcelli. 2019. “Reconstruction Aid, Public Infrastructure, and Economic Development: The Case of the Marshall Plan in Italy.” Working paper.

Burgess, Robin, Rohini Pande, and Grace Wong. 2005. “Banking for the Poor: Evidence from India.” *Journal of the European Economic Association* 3(2–3):268–278.

Evans, Peter B. 1995. *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*. Princeton University Press.

Kohli, Atul. 2004. *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery*. Cambridge University Press.

Lane, Nathan. 2021. “Manufacturing Revolutions: Industrial Policy and Industrialization in South Korea.” Working paper.

## **Class 9 (4/4): Bureaucratic Recruitment**

Bhavani, Rikhil R., and Alexander Lee. 2021. “Does Affirmative Action Worsen Bureaucratic Performance? Evidence from the Indian Administrative Service.” *American Journal of Political Science* 65(1):5–20.

Guardado, Jenny. 2018. “Office-selling, corruption, and long-term development in Peru.” *American Political Science Review* 112(4):971–995.

Johnson-Kanu, Ada. 2022. “Colonial Legacies in State Building: Ethnicity and Bureaucratic Representation in Nigeria.” Working paper.

Pierskalla, Jan H., Adam Lauretig, Andrew S. Rosenberg, and Audrey Sacks. 2021. “Democratization and Representative Bureaucracy: An Analysis of Promotion Patterns in Indonesia’s Civil Service, 1980–2015.” *American Journal of Political Science* 65(2):261–277.

Toral, Guillermo. 2019. “Political bureaucratic cycles: Public employment and service delivery around elections in Brazil.” Working paper.

## **Class 10 (4/11): Bureaucratic Monitoring and Turnover**

Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2016. *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap*. Cornell University Press.

Bertrand, Marianne, Robin Burgess, Arunish Chawla, and Guo Xu. 2020. “The Glittering Prizes: Career Incentives and Bureaucrat Performance.” *The Review of Economic Studies* 87(2):626–655.

Guillermo Toral. 2021. “Turnover: How Electoral Accountability Disrupts the Bureaucracy and Service Delivery.” Working paper.

Iyer, Lakshmi, and Anandi Mani. 2012. “Traveling Agents: Political Change and Bureaucratic Turnover in India.” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 94(3):723–739.

Rasul, Imran and Daniel Rogger. 2018. “Management of Bureaucrats and Public Service Delivery: Evidence from the Nigerian Civil Service.” *The Economic Journal* 128(608):413–446.

## **Class 11 (4/18): Bureaucratic Accountability**

Bhavani, Rikhil R., and Alexander Lee. 2018. “Local Embeddedness and Bureaucratic Performance: Evidence from India.” *Journal of Politics* 80(1):71–87.

Erlich, Aaron, Daniel Berliner, Brian Palmer-Rubin, and Benjamin E. Bagozzi. 2021. “Media attention and bureaucratic responsiveness.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 31(4):687–70.

Hassan, Mai. 2020. *Regime Threats and State Solutions: Bureaucratic Loyalty and Embeddedness in Kenya*. Cambridge University Press.

Honig, Dan. 2019. "When reporting undermines performance: The costs of politically constrained organizational autonomy in foreign aid implementation." *International Organization* 73(1):171—201.

Raffler, Pia. 2020. "Does Political Oversight of the Bureaucracy Increase Accountability? Field Experimental Evidence from an Electoral Autocracy." Working Paper.

**Class 12 (4/25): Class Presentations, 1/2**

**Class 13 (5/2): Class Presentations, 2/2**

**Final papers due on Canvas, 5/9**