

Government 2129: Governance in Developing Countries

Spring 2019, CGIS Knafel 108, Wednesday, 3.30-5.30 pm

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Course description

This graduate seminar provides an overview of the research frontier on governance in developing countries, including democracies, electoral autocracies, and authoritarian regimes. Topics include voting behavior, direct accountability, decentralization, and the bureaucracy. While including some foundational readings, the syllabus puts emphasis on recent work. Readings primarily draw from comparative politics, political economy, and development economics. In addition to theory and empirics, the course focuses on the nuts and bolts of implementing governance-related fieldwork in developing countries.

Course objectives

The objectives of this seminar are threefold. First, the substantive aim is to survey the research frontier on governance in low-income countries and identify gaps in our understanding. Second, the seminar aims to equip students with practical skills for planning and implementing field research and structuring and conducting data analysis. Third, the seminar aims to professionalize students by exposing them to the academic processes of replicating others' work, writing reviews, presenting research ideas, and writing research proposals.

Requirements

Parts of this seminar are hands-on, and students are expected to have a background in causal inference and statistical programming. Students will replicate the data analysis of a recent study, write a peer review of an academic article, and write a research proposal. In addition, students are expected to come to class prepared and ready to discuss the readings. This includes a week where students will present their ideas for their research designs. Students should include three discussion questions prompted by the readings before every class (by 1.30 pm) in the Google document linked to on Canvas.

- Peer Review: Every student will write one review of a working paper from the syllabus.
- Replication: In the second half of the semester, we will conduct replication exercises. Invited researchers will share the dataset and code for a working paper of theirs in advance of the class. Students will form groups and replicate and extend the analysis, and

present findings and suggestions to the class and the invited researcher. Each student will conduct one replication exercise.

- Research proposal: 20-30 page research proposal on a topic chosen by the student (in consultation with me). The research proposal can take the form of a grant application (which you should plan to submit) or a detailed pre-analysis plan (for observational or experimental work).

Grades

Research proposal: 50%, replication: 20%, peer review: 10%, participation: 20%.

Materials and Access

All course materials are available on Canvas.

Collaboration and academic integrity policy

Students are encouraged to discuss the materials for class with each other. You may also discuss your ideas for your research design, but the writing of assignments must be entirely your own, using standard citation practices to acknowledge the use of books, articles, websites, lectures, discussions, etc.

Topics and Readings

Week 1: January 30. Introduction

Background reading: Olken, B.A., Pande, R., 2011. [Governance Review Paper](#). J-PAL Governance Initiative.

Week 2: February 6. Electoral accountability

Fearon, James D. 1999. "Electoral accountability and the control of politicians: selecting good types versus sanctioning poor performance," in *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, edited by Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin, Cambridge University Press, Chapter 2.

Ashworth, Scott, and Ethan Bueno De Mesquita. 2014. "Is voter competence good for voters? Information, rationality, and democratic performance." *American Political Science Review* 108(3):565-587.

Platas, M.R., Raffler, P., 2018. The Limits of Partisanship: How Information Can Encourage Crossing Party Lines. *Working Paper*

Dunning et al., 2019. Voter information campaigns and political accountability: Cumulative findings from a pre-registered meta-analysis of coordinated trials. *Working Paper*

Bhandari, Abhit, Horacio Larreguy, and John Marshall, 2018. An Empirical Anatomy of Political Accountability: Experimental Evidence from a Pre-Election Information Dissemination Campaign in Senegal. *Working Paper*

What makes a good peer review?

Miller et al., 2013. How to be a peer reviewer. PS.

How to write a peer review PLOS One.

Week 3: February 13. Non-electoral accountability

You can begin submitting peer reviews this week.

Banerjee, Abhijit, Lakshmi Iyer, and Rohini Somanathan. 2007. "Public Action for Public Goods," in *Handbook of Development Economics*, edited by T. Paul Schultz and John A. Strauss, Elsevier. [Chapter 49]

Kosack, S., Bridgman, G., Creighton, J., Tolmie, C., Fung, A., 2018. Encouraging Participation. *Working Paper*.

Raffler, P., Posner, D.N., Parkerson, D, 2018. The Weakness of Bottom-Up Accountability: Experimental Evidence from the Ugandan Health Sector. *Working Paper*

Lieberman, E.S., Posner, D.N. and Tsai, L.L., 2014. Does information lead to more active citizenship? Evidence from an education intervention in rural Kenya. *World Development*, 60, pp.69-83.

Further reading:

Ostrom, Elinor. 1998. "A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action: Presidential Address." *American Political Science Review* 92(1):1-22.

Banerjee, Abhijit V., Rukmini Banerji, Esther Duflo, Rachel Glennerster, and Stuti Khemani. 2010. "Pitfalls of Participatory Programs: Evidence from a randomized evaluation in education in India." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 2(1):1-30.

Week 4: February 20. Decentralization

Pierskalla, J., 2018. The Proliferation of Decentralized Governing Units. In: *Decentralized Governance and Accountability*", edited by Jonathan Rodden and Erik Wibbels, Cambridge University Press

Grossman, G. and Lewis, J.I., 2014. Administrative Unit Proliferation. *American Political Science Review*, 108(1), pp.196-217.

Hassan, M., 2016. A State of Change: District Creation in Kenya After the Beginning of Multi-Party Elections. *Political Research Quarterly*, 69(3), pp.510-521.

Rico, G. and Liñeira, R., 2018. Pass the Buck If You Can: How Partisan Competition Triggers Attribution Bias in Multilevel Democracies. *Political Behavior*, 40(1), pp.175-196.

Bardhan, P., 2002. Decentralization of governance and development. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 16(4), pp.185-205.

Further reading:

Rodden, J., 2004. Comparative Federalism and Decentralization: On Meaning and Measurement. *Comparative Politics* 36,4: 481-500.

Week 5: February 27. Bureaucracy I

Hassan, M., 2017. The strategic shuffle: Ethnic geography, the internal security apparatus, and elections in Kenya. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(2), pp.382-395.

Iyer, L. and Mani, A., 2012. Traveling agents: Political change and bureaucratic turnover in India. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 94(3), pp.723-739.

Pepinsky, T.B., Pierskalla, J.H. and Sacks, A., 2017. Bureaucracy and service delivery. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20, pp.249-268.

Williams, M.J., 2017. The political economy of unfinished development projects: Corruption, clientelism, or collective choice? *American Political Science Review*, 111(4), pp.705-723.

Finan, F., Olken, B.A. and Pande, R., 2015. The personnel economics of the state (No. w21825). *National Bureau of Economic Research*.

Week 6: March 6. Bureaucracy II

Gulzar, S. and Pasquale, B.J., 2017. Politicians, bureaucrats, and development: Evidence from India. *American Political Science Review*, 111(1), pp.162-183.

Brierley, S., 2018. Unprincipled Principals: Co-opted Bureaucrats and Corruption in Ghana. *Working Paper*.

Martin, L.E., Raffler, P., 2018. Fault Lines: The Effects of Bureaucratic Power on Electoral Accountability. *Working Paper*

Rasul, I., Rogger, D., 2018. Management of Bureaucrats and Public Service Delivery: Evidence from the Nigerian Civil Service, *Economic Journal* 128 (608): pp.413-446

Raffler, P., 2018. Does political oversight of the bureaucracy increase accountability? Field experimental evidence from an electoral autocracy. Working paper.

Week 7: March 13. Autocratic and hybrid regimes

Last day to submit a peer review

Svolik, M.W., 2012. *The politics of authoritarian rule*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.

Truex, R., 2016. *Making autocracy work: representation and responsiveness in modern China*. Cambridge University Press.

Gandhi, J., Heller, A., Reuter, O.J., 2018. Shoring up Power: Strengthening Regime Parties via Electoral Reform. *Working Paper*.

Reuter, O.J. and Szakonyi, D., 2019. Elite Defection Under Autocracy: Evidence from Russia. *American Political Science Review* (forthcoming).

Magaloni, B., 2006. Voting for autocracy: Hegemonic party survival and its demise in Mexico. Cambridge University Press.

Young, L.E., 2018. The psychology of state repression: Fear and dissent decisions in Zimbabwe. *American Political Science Review*, pp.1-16.

No class on March 20. Spring break

Week 8: March 27. Nuts and bolts of conducting fieldwork

Glennerster, R. and Takavarasha, K., 2013. *Running randomized evaluations: A practical guide*. Princeton University Press.

Karlan, D. and Appel, J., 2016. *Failing in the field: what we can learn when field research goes wrong*. Princeton University Press.

Cronin-Furman, K. and Lake, M., 2018. Ethics abroad: Fieldwork in fragile and violent contexts. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, pp.1-8.

IPA's [Research Protocols](#)

EGAP Methods Guide: [Ten Things to Know About Survey Design](#)

EGAP Methods Guide: [Ten Things to Know About Survey Implementation](#)

Week 9: April 3. Integrating quantitative and qualitative research

Humphreys, M. and Jacobs, A.M., 2015. Mixing methods: A Bayesian approach. *American Political Science Review*, 109(4), pp.653-673.

Thachil, T., 2018. Improving Surveys Through Ethnography: Insights from India's Urban Periphery. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 53(3), pp.281-299.

Levy Paluck, E., 2010. The promising integration of qualitative methods and field experiments. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 628(1), pp.59-71.

Fearon, J.D. and Laitin, D.D., 2009. Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*.

Further reading:

Loyle, C.E., Smith, A. and Swedlund, H.J., 2019. Fieldwork in "Restrictive" Environments: Contrasting Methodologies. SAGE Methods Case.

Week 10: April 10. Presentation of research proposals (3.30-6 pm)

This session will be structured as a mini-workshop. Each student will circulate a memo summarizing their research idea in advance. Each student will provide written comments on another student's memo and discuss it in class. Each student is expected to come to class prepared to offer constructive feedback on all other memos. The aim of this session is to make everyone's research better.

Week 11: April 17. Replication class I

Rebecca Littman (MIT). Elite Cues and Support for Reintegration of Former Combatants: Evidence from Nigeria (with Graeme Blair, Elizabeth Nugent, Rebecca Wolfe, and Jiyoun Kim)

Week 12: April 24. Replication class II

John Marshall (Columbia). Opposition Media and Political Accountability: Evidence from Venezuela (with Dorothy Kronick)

Week 13. May 1. Replication class III

Taylor Boas (BU) and Guillermo Toral (MIT). Accountability Backlash: Negative electoral responses to the quality of public services from field and natural experiments in Brazil (with Danny Hidalgo)