

Summer Term 2012

Seminar Comparative Political Institutions: Politics in Westminster Democracies

Prof. Dr. André Kaiser

Class Time: Fri, 12:00 – 13:30
Classroom: Gottfried-Keller-Straße 6, Hörsaal des Forschungsinstituts
Special meeting: Mon, 2 April 2012, 17:45 – 19:15 (room tba)
First regular session: Fri, 20 April 2012, 12:00 – 13:30

Course description:

On the most general level, Comparative Political Institutions (CPI) deals with three sets of questions: (1) Why do we find specifically shaped political institutions in one political system, but not in others? (2) Why and under what conditions do political institutions change? (3) What are the effects of political institutions? Do they matter? The different versions of new institutionalism (rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism, cultural institutionalism) give diverging answers to these questions.

The course introduces into this field of research, emphasizing rational choice and historical institutional lines of thought and employing Westminster democracies as illustration. Historically, this family of nations had based their political systems on the British model of majoritarian democracy, as Arend Lijphart calls it. More recently, a number of notable institutional reforms away from majoritarianism occurred. We will focus on Australia, Britain, Canada, and New Zealand. Accordingly, we will ask: Why has the Westminster institutional regime taken this shape? What are the reasons for recent institutional change? And what are the effects of these political institutions? In this way the course combines a conceptual introduction into CPI with an advanced and analytic introduction into the politics of Westminster democracies.

Although not a formal precondition for participation, it would be helpful if participants had some general idea of new institutionalism and the basic features of the political systems of Westminster democracies.

Logistics:

Enrolment will take place in the meeting on Friday, 20 April 2012. After that, no further enrolments will be accepted. Students are expected to:

- attend class on a regular basis
- actively contribute to class discussions
- complete assigned readings according to schedule
- depending on 'Prüfungsordnung' and 'Anrechnung des Seminars', either write a research paper of 15-20 pages in length, handed in on 15 March 2010 (late assignments will be penalized, unless prior arrangements are made!), or sit a written exam
- give a presentation of the mandatory readings for (at least) one class (all participants!). I will ask one or two participants per class to introduce the mandatory readings in up to 10 minutes. Presentations will be marked and count for 10 per cent of the overall mark of the research paper or written exam.

Since most reading assignments are in English, this will be the general classroom language as well. Participants therefore must know enough English to be able to participate actively. Perfection is not required – you just need to understand and make yourself understood.

Office hour during term:

Tues, 11.30 – 12.30 in my office.

General readings:

- Courtney, John C. and David E. Smith (2010). *The Oxford Handbook of Canadian Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fenna, Alan (2004). *Australian public policy*. Second edition, Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Education.
- Flinders, Matthew Flinders et al. (eds) (2009). *The Oxford Handbook of British Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lijphart, Arend (1999). *Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, New Haven und London: Yale University Press.
- Miller, Raymond (ed.) (2010). *New Zealand Government and Politics*. Fully revised fifth edition, Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Miragliotta, Narelle, Wayne Errington and Nicholas Barry (2009). *The Australian Political System in Action*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reading assignments:

A reader with the required texts will be made available to participants from early April at the chair.

Course schedule:

- 2 April 2012 **Special Meeting: Guest speaker**
Dr Harshan Kumarasingham (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand): topic tba
- 20 April 2012 **Comparative Political Institutions as a Research Field – Conceptual Preliminaries**
- R: André Kaiser, Neuere Beiträge zur empirischen Institutionenanalyse. Von der Gegenstands- zur Problemorientierung, *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 48 (2007): 119-135.
 Kenneth A. Shepsle, Studying Institutions, *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1 (1989): 131-147.
- 27 April 2012 **Majoritarian Democracy – An Institutional Equilibrium?**
- R: Matthew Flinders, Majoritarian Democracy in Britain: New Labour and the Constitution, *West European Politics* 28 (2005): 61-93. Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, New Haven und London: Yale University Press 1999, 9-30. Donley T. Studlar and Kyle Christensen, Is Canada a Westminster or Consensus Democracy? A Brief Analysis, *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39 (2006): 837-841.
- 4 May 2012 **The Core Executive**
- R: Martin Burch and Ian Holliday, The Blair Government and the Core Executive, *Government and Opposition* 39 (2004): 1-21. Elaine Thompson, The Westminster Mutation, in: Dean Jaensch and Patrick Weller (eds): *Responsible Government in Australia*, Sydney: Drummond 1980, 32-40. Jonathan Boston, Innovative Political Management: Multi-party governance in New Zealand, *Policy Quarterly* 5/2 (2009): 52-59.
- 11 May 2012 **Executive-Legislative Relations I – A Powerless Parliament?**

R: Matthew Flinders and Alexandra Kelso, Mind the Gap: Political Analysis, Public Expectations and the Parliamentary Decline Thesis, *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 13 (2011): 249-268. Anthony King, Modes of Executive–Legislative Relations: Great Britain, France and West Germany, *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 1 (1976): 11-34.

18 May 2012 **Executive-Legislative Relations II – What Role for the Parliamentary Opposition?**

R: André Kaiser, Parliamentary Opposition in Westminster Democracies: Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, *Journal of Legislative Studies* 14 (2008): 20-45. Torun Dewan and Arthur Spirling, Strategic Opposition and Government Cohesion in Westminster Democracies, *American Political Science Review* 105 (2011): 337-358.

25 May 2012 **Why has First Past the Post Survived for So Long? What are the Determinants for Success in Electoral Reform?**

R: Valerie Heitshusen, Garry Young and David M. Wood, Electoral Context and MP Constituency Focus in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, *American Journal of Political Science*, 49 (2005): 32-45. Matthew Flinders, Explaining Majoritarian Modification: The Politics of Electoral Reform in the United Kingdom and British Columbia, *International Political Science Review* 31 (2010): 41-58

8 June 2012 **Two-Party Politics I – Why do Third Parties Persist?**

R: Octavio Amorim Neto and Gary Cox, Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures and the Number of Parties, *American Journal of Political Science* 41 (1997): 149-174.

15 June 2012 **Two-Party Politics II – Electoral Systems and the Median Voter Theorem**

R: André Blais and Marc André Bodet, Does Proportional Representation Foster Closer Congruence Between Citizens and Policy Makers?, *Comparative Political Studies* 39 (2006): 1243-1262. André Kaiser, Anthony Downs, Ökonomische Theorie der Demokratie, in Manfred Brocker (ed.), *Geschichte des Politischen Denkens – Ausgewählte Werkanalysen*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 2007, 619-634.

22 June 2012 **Multi-level Governance and Majoritarian Democracy**

R: James Mitchell, The United Kingdom as a State of Unions: Unity of Government, Equality of Political Rights and Diversity of Institutions, in Alan Trench (ed.), *Devolution and Power in the UK State*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 2007, 24-47. Jörg Broschek, Federalism and Political Change. Canada and Germany in Historical-Institutionalist Perspective, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 43 (2010): 1-24.

29 June 2012 **Bicameralism**

R: André Kaiser, House of Lords and Monarchy: British majoritarian democracy and the current reform debate on its pre-democratic institutions, in Peter Catterall/Ulrike Jordan/Wolfram Kaiser (eds), *Reforming the Constitution: Debates in Twentieth-Century Britain*, London: Frank Cass 2000, 97-128. Meg Russell and Meghan Benton, (Re)assessing Parliamentary Policy Impact: The Case of the Australian Senate, *Australian Journal of Political Science* 45 (2010): 159-174.

6 July 2012

Constitutional Reform without a Codified Constitution

- R: Vernon Bogdanor, Constitutional Reform in Britain: The Quiet Revolution, *Annual Review of Political Science* 8 (2005): 73-98. Matthew Flinders, Majoritarian Democracy in Britain: New Labour and the Constitution, *West European Politics* 28 (2005): 61-93.

13 July 2012

Political Institutions and Satisfaction with Democracy

- R: Christopher J. Anderson and Christine A. Guillory, Political Institutions and Satisfaction with Democracy: A Cross-National Analysis of Consensus and Majoritarian Systems, *American Political Science Review* 91 (1997): 66-81. Ailsa Henderson, Satisfaction with Democracy: Evidence from Westminster Systems, *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 18/1 (2008): 3-26. Julian Bernauer and Adrian Vatter, Can't get No Satisfaction with the Westminster Model? Winners, Losers and the Effects of Consensual and Direct Democratic Institutions on Satisfaction with Democracy, *European Journal of Political Research* 2011 (doi: 10.1111/j.1475-6765.2011.02007.x) (Article first published online: 29 August 2011).