Elections Voters and Leaders

Prof. Michal Shamir

Elections are the major instrument for citizen influence on decision makers and policy making. In the first decade of the third millennium, elections are held in most countries of the world, and about 60% of them may be considered electoral democracies in which competitive and fair elections are conducted regularly with universal adult suffrage for all citizens. The seminar focuses on elections from a theoretical, comparative and historical framework. It combines discussion of the reading material, political events and empirical research of the students on elections.

The students are expected to come regularly to class, read the weekly assignments; participate in class discussions; submit two short reports, a preliminary research proposal, and a final research paper, written as an academic article (20-30 pages); and present their research project in class.

The preliminary research proposal is due in the 9th week of the semester (May 19, 2015). The final research paper is due August 20, 2015.

The final grade will be based on the seminar research paper (60%), on class participation and presentation (20%), and 20% on the reports and preliminary research proposal.

Office Hour: Tuesday 12:00-13:00 (Naftali Bldg, room 520).

e-mail: m3600@post.tau.ac.il

Topics and Reading List

March 3, 2015

Introduction: Elections and Democracy (2 weeks)

J. Schumpeter Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy 1950, Chapter 12, pp. 269-283 (also available in Hebrew)


http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=1

Additional Reading:


March 10, 2015
1) Elections and Democracy (continued)

2) Guest Lecture "Going to War: When Citizens and the Press Matter"

March 17, 2015 – day off
Elections for the 20th Knesset

March 24
1) What Were the Elections for the 20th Knesset About?

2) Election Studies in Context

\textit{European Journal of Political Research} Political Data Yearbooks
http://www.cses.org/about.htm
http://www.ines.tau.ac.il/

March 31
Election Rules: Electoral Systems and Reforms

April 7 - Passover break

April 14
Participation in Elections
J. Aldrich "Rational Choice and Turnout" \textit{American Journal of Political Science} 37, 1993, 246-278.
A. Blais \textit{To vote or not to vote: The merits and limits of rational choice theory} 2000, Chs. 1, 2 and conclusion, pp. 17-54, 137-144.

Additional Reading:
April 21
The Vote Decision: Groups and Social Cleavages


April 28
The Vote Decision: Issues, Party Identification, Candidates


Additional Reading:

May 5
Leaders and Elections


A. King (ed.) *Leaders' Personalities and the Outcomes of Democratic Elections* 2002, Ch. 8

Additional Reading:

May 12
The Economy and Elections


Additional Reading:


May 19
War, Terror and Elections


(continued)
Additional Reading:
H. F. Weisberg "Electoral Democracy during Wartime: The 2004 U.S. Election" *Political Behavior* 29, 2007, 143-149. See also other contributions to this volume.


**May 26**
**The Gender Gap in Elections and in Voting**


Additional Reading:

**June 2**
**The Election Campaign, New and Old Media and the Voter**


Additional Reading:
D. Ohr "Changing patterns in political communication" Ch. 2 in K. Aarts, A. Blais & H. Schmitt (eds.) *Political leaders and democratic elections* 2011, 11-34.


**June 9**
1) **Elections and Democracy Reconsidered**

2) **Student Research Projects – Class Presentations**

**Major Political Science journals with articles on elections and voting behavior**

*American Journal of Political Science*
*American Political Science Review*
*British Journal of Political Science*
*Comparative Political Studies*
*Comparative Politics*
*Electoral Studies*
*European Journal of Political Research*
*Journal of Politics*
*Party Politics*
*Political Behavior*
*Public Opinion Quarterly*