

**Course Title:** Political Parties, Policy-Making and the Accountability Challenge in the Digital Age

**Instructor:** Gorana Mistic, Ph.D.

**ECTS:** 4

**Term:** Winter

**Module:** Elective, Governance specialization, Media and Communication specialization

**Relation to other courses:** n/a

### **Background and Overall Aim of the Course:**

Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer over the years shows that political parties are overwhelmingly perceived as the most corrupt institutions around the globe. The trust in government and parliaments has fallen worldwide: people feel that they cannot influence government policies and decisions. In this context of low trust in political parties, and focusing on their pivotal role in representative democracies, the aim of the course is to analyze the influence parties have on policy-making and explore the related accountability challenges. We will analyze different factors that affect political parties internally, such as party patronage and party corruption. We will explore the role of the regulations, civil society, and media, and discuss issues such as press freedom, media capture, campaign advertising, undue influence and political financing regulations. In the era of new media and 'fake news', we will discuss whether voters are informed better, whether more informed voters make better decisions, and why people vote for corrupt politicians.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completing the course, the students will be able to:

- Analyze and discuss how political parties influence policy-making;
- Identify and discuss challenges related to keeping political parties accountable;
- Critically evaluate the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms related to political parties and policy-making, and propose solutions relevant to the context;
- Work collaboratively, provide peer feedback, and reflect on own learning.

## Learning Activities and Teaching Methods:

This is a discussion-based course, embedded in the experiential learning paradigm, i.e. teaching with case studies and simulations. Through this course students will be engaged in areas in which they have traditionally been excluded, namely curriculum and assessment design. Recognizing that students have individual strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles, offering choice of assessment, and an option to participate in syllabus design, are strategies for practicing student-centered teaching and enhancing responsibility for learning. Within a given framework of accountability mechanisms, students will decide on the case studies (i.e. context, examples, geographical area, etc.) to be analyzed and discussed in class. The course is conceptualized as a collaborative student project, not only in the selection of cases, but also in documenting the course work through a course blog, where all written assignments will be published. Overall, the course is based on the scholarship of teaching and learning that puts an emphasis on a more shared responsibility for learning among students and teachers, a more democratic intellectual community, and a more authentic co-inquiry.

## Assessment:

In this course students will be engaged in curriculum and assessment design. This means that students will propose relevant case studies to analyze and discuss in the class (student lead seminar). In addition, students will choose the type of assignment, and the share (within the proposed range) that a particular assignment will have in their overall grade as follows:

- **15% Preparation**  
This includes preparing the readings, short pre- and post- class assignments when applicable, peer-feedback to colleague's op-ed(s), and a simulation reflection. Each student will write a 200-300 words feedback on colleague's accountability op-ed, as well as a 300-500 words reflection on simulation.
- **20-30% Participation**  
This includes in-class and online discussions and group work.
- **20-30% Accountability challenge op-ed**  
Each student will write a 1000-1300 words long op-ed addressing a topic related to accountability and political parties. The topics should be consulted with the instructor. The final op-ed should incorporate peer-feedback where appropriate. Op-eds will be published on the course blog.
- **35% Policy Brief OR a Case Study class**  
Each student can choose between leading a case study seminar and writing a 1500-1800 words policy brief on a topic related to the course content.

## COURSE CONTENT AND READINGS

Where not marked (case study classes), required readings will be agreed on with students during the first two weeks of the course based on the selected cases.

### Week 1: Declining Trust in Political Parties, Policy-Making and Accountability (discussion seminar)

#### Key material for preparation:

- Ivan Krastev | TEDGlobal 2012 | Can democracy exist without trust?  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/ivan\\_krastev\\_can\\_democracy\\_exist\\_without\\_trust#t-825435](https://www.ted.com/talks/ivan_krastev_can_democracy_exist_without_trust#t-825435)

#### Optional readings:

- Caillier, J. (2010). Citizen trust, political corruption, and voting behavior: Connecting the dots. *Politics & Policy*, 38(5), 1015-1035.
- De Sousa, L. (2001). Political parties and corruption in Portugal. *West European Politics*, 24(1), 157-180.
- Greskovits, B. (2015). The hollowing and backsliding of democracy in East Central Europe. *Global Policy*, 6(S1), 28-37.
- OECD. (2017). Trust and public policy: How better governance can help rebuild public trust.  
<https://www.oecd.org/gov/trust-and-public-policy-9789264268920-en.htm>

### Week 2: Party Patronage (World café style seminar)

Students are required to sign up for one of the chapters from Kopecký & Spirova (2012) and prepare notes for the class discussion following the preparation questions on Moodle. Students are welcome to contact the instructor to suggest and prepare readings related to party patronage outside scope of the book (i.e. outside European democracies).

- Kopecký, P., Mair, P., & Spirova, M. (Eds.). (2012). *Party patronage and party government in European democracies*. Oxford University Press.

### Week 3: Clientelism and Vote Buying (a case study class)

- Bratton, M. (2008). Vote buying and violence in Nigerian election campaigns. *Electoral Studies*, 27, 621-632.
- Çarköglü, A., Aytaç, S. E. (2015). Who gets targeted for vote-buying? Evidence from an augmented list experiment in Turkey. *European Political Science Review*, 7, 547-566.
- Frye, T., Reuter, O. J., Szakonyi, D. (2015). Hitting them with carrots: Voter intimidation and vote buying in Russia. Retrieved from [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2705075](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2705075)
- Mares, I., & Young, L. (2019). Varieties of Clientelism in Hungarian Elections. *Comparative Politics*, 51(3), 449-480.
- Mares, I., & Young, L. E. (2018). The Core Voter's Curse: Clientelistic Threats and Promises in Hungarian Elections. *Comparative Political Studies*, 51(11), 1441-1471.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414018758754>
- Mares, I., & Zhu, B. (2015). The production of electoral intimidation: Economic and political incentives. *Comparative Politics*, 48(1), 23-43.
- Nichter, S. (2008). Vote buying or turnout buying? Machine politics and the secret ballot. *American Political Science Review*, 102, 19-31.

- Oliveros, V. (2016). Making it personal: Clientelism, favors, and the personalization of public administration in Argentina. *Comparative Politics*, 48, 373-391.
- Wantchekon, L. (2003). Clientelism and voting behavior: Evidence from a field experiment in Benin. *World Politics*, 55, 399-422.

#### **Week 4: Money in Politics and Party Corruption: Undue Influence (a case study class)**

- Elin, F., Jones, S., & Ohman, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns A Handbook on Political Finance*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.
- Fisher, J. (1994). Why do companies make donations to political parties?. *Political Studies*, 42(4), 690-699.
- Fisher, J. (1999). Modelling the decision to donate by individual party members: the case of British parties. *Party politics*, 5(1), 19-38.
- Koß, M. (2010). *The politics of party funding: State funding to political parties and party competition in Western Europe*. OUP Oxford.
- McMenamin, I. (2013). *If money talks, what does it say?: corruption and business financing of political parties*. OUP Oxford.
- McMenamin, I. (2019). Party Identification, the Policy Space and Business Donations to Political Parties. *Political Studies*, 0032321719841243.
- Nassmacher, Karl-Heinz (2003) Introduction: Political Parties, Funding and Democracy. In: Reginald Austin and Maja Tjernström (eds). *Funding of Political Parties and Electoral Campaigns*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

#### **Week 5: Regulation of Political Financing (a simulation class)**

##### **Preparation instructions:**

- Choose your role for the game. Read the short introduction to the game provided within the role choosing system on Moodle.
- Consult the Casas-Zamora reading. This is a short, general overview of political finance and state funding systems. After reading the article, you should have a better idea of what political financing means, as well as which areas are regulated, and why.
- Fill in the homework spreadsheet on political financing regulations in your country. See separate instructions on Moodle. To better understand the questions and the meaning of the homework, you are strongly advised to do the reading first.

**Post-session assignment:** simulation reflection

##### **Key reading:**

Casas-Zamora, K. (2008). Political finance and State funding systems: An overview. IFES.

##### **Optional readings:**

- Casal Bertoa, F., Molenaar, F., Piccio, D. R., & Rashkova, E. R. (2014). The world upside down: Delegitimising political finance regulation. *International Political Science Review*, 35(3), 355–375.
- Casas-Zamora, K. (2005) *Paying for Democracy: Political Finance and State Funding for Parties*. Colchester: ECPR Press
- Check, Nicasius Achu, Tsholofelo Madise, Nkululeko Majosi and Yukihiro Hamada (2019). The Integrity of Political Finance Systems in Africa: Tackling Political Corruption. International IDEA Policy Paper No. 20. <https://doi.org/10.31752/idea.2019.24>

- Mobrand, Erik, Fernando Casal Bértoa and Yukihiko Hamada (2019). The Integrity of Political Finance Systems in Asia: Tackling Political Corruption. International IDEA Policy Paper No. 19. <https://doi.org/10.31752/idea.2019.22>
- Nwokora, Z. (2014). The distinctive politics of campaign finance reform. *Party Politics*, 20(6), 918–929.
- Öhman, M. (2011). Global Trends in the Regulation of Political Finance. Paper prepared for presentation at the IPSA-ECPR Joint Conference, Sao Paulo 16 – 19 February 2011.
- Piccio, D. R. (2014). A Self-interested Legislator? Party Regulation in Italy. *South European Society and Politics*, 19(1), 135–152.
- Pinto-Duschinsky, M. (2002). Financing politics: A global view. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(4), 69-86.
- Pujas, V., & Rhodes, M. (1999). Party finance and political scandal in Italy, Spain and France. *West European Politics*, 22(3), 41-63
- Roper, Steven D. (2002). The Influence of Romanian Campaign Finance Laws on Party System Development and Corruption, *Party Politics*, 8(2), 175-192
- Scarrow, S. E. (2007). Political finance in comparative perspective. *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.*, 10, 193-210.
- Van Biezen, Ingrid (2003). *Financing Political Parties and Election Campaigns – Guidelines*. Strasbourg Cedex : Council of Europe Publishing.

### Week 6: Reading week

- Peer feedback and accountability op-ed deadline
- Catching up with readings

### Week 7: Press Freedom: Media as a Watchdog (a case study class)

- Brunetti, A., & Weder, B. (2003). A free press is bad news for corruption. *Journal of Public Economics*, 87(7–8), 1801–1824. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2727\(01\)00186-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2727(01)00186-4)
- Chang, E. C. C., Golden, M. A., & Hill, S. J. (2010). Legislative Malfeasance and Political Accountability. *World Politics*, 62(2), 177–220. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887110000031>
- Chowdhury, S. K. (2004). The effect of democracy and press freedom on corruption: an empirical test. *Economics Letters*, (85), 93–101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econlet.2004.03.024>
- Fell, D. (2005). Political and media liberalization and political corruption in Taiwan. *China Quarterly*, 38(184), 875–893. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741005000548>
- Larreguy, H. A., Marshall, J., & Snyder Jr, J. M. (2014). *Revealing malfeasance: How local media facilitates electoral sanctioning of mayors in Mexico* (No. w20697). National Bureau of Economic Research.
- World Press Freedom Index: <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>

### Week 8: New Media and Political Campaigns: *Can Democracy Survive the Internet?* (a case study class)

- Benkler, Y., Faris, R., & Roberts, H. (2018). *Network propaganda: Manipulation, disinformation, and radicalization in American politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Broersma, M., & Graham, T. (2012). Social media as beat: Tweets as a news source during the 2010 British and Dutch elections. *Journalism Practice*, 6(3), 403-419.
- Howard, P. N. (2006). *New media campaigns and the managed citizen*. Cambridge University Press.
- Is Facebook undermining democracy in Africa? By Larry Madowo, BBC Africa business editor. 24 May 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48349671>

- Jha, C. K., & Sarangi, S. (2017). Does social media reduce corruption?. *Information Economics and Policy*, 39, 60-71.
- Persily, N. (2017). The 2016 US Election: Can democracy survive the internet?. *Journal of democracy*, 28(2), 63-76.
- Smyth, T. N., & Best, M. L. (2013). Tweet to trust: social media and elections in West Africa. In *Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development: Full Papers-Volume 1* (pp. 133-141). ACM.
- Spain's election and the battle for control of social media. By Natalia Oelsner, Marta Rodriguez and Cristina Abellan-Matamoros. 26 April 2019. <https://www.euronews.com/2019/04/26/weekend-long-read-social-media-use-in-spain-s-election-campaign-the-good-the-bad-and-the-u>
- Zuiderveen Borgesius, F., Möller, J., Kruike-meier, S., Ó Fathaigh, R., Irion, K., Dobber, T., & de Vreese, C. H. (2018). Online political microtargeting: Promises and threats for democracy. *Utrecht Law Review*, 14(1), 82-96.
- How YouTube Radicalized Brazil. By Max Fisher and Amanda Taub. The New York Times. 11 August 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/11/world/americas/youtube-brazil.html?module=inline>

## Week 9: Turning Clicks into Votes: A Case Study of Cambridge Analytica

### Key materials for preparation:

- Alexander Nix | 2016 Concordia Annual Summit in New York | Cambridge Analytica - The Power of Big Data and Psychographics <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8Dd5aVXLcC>
- Carole Cadwalladr | TED2019 | Facebook's role in Brexit — and the threat to democracy [https://www.ted.com/talks/carole\\_cadwalladr\\_facebook\\_s\\_role\\_in\\_brexit\\_and\\_the\\_threat\\_to\\_democracy?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/carole_cadwalladr_facebook_s_role_in_brexit_and_the_threat_to_democracy?language=en)
- Cadwalladr, C., & Graham-Harrison, E. (2018). The Cambridge analytica files. *The Guardian*, 21, 6-7. [http://davelevy.info/Downloads/cabridgeanalyticafiles%20theguardian\\_20180318.pdf](http://davelevy.info/Downloads/cabridgeanalyticafiles%20theguardian_20180318.pdf)
- McMenamin, I. (2018). If Money Talks, What Does it Say About Brexit?. *DCU Brexit Institute-Working paper*, (9-2018).

**Alternatively:** The Great Hack. Directed by Karim Amer, Jehane Noujaim. With Brittany Kaiser, David Carroll, Paul-Olivier Dehaye, Ravi Naik. Producers: Karim Amer, Pedro Kos, Geralyn Dreyfous, Judy Korin. 2019 Netflix documentary. 113 minutes.

## Week 10: Civil Society and Protests as a Means to Keep Governments Accountable (a case study class)

- Dimitrova, A., & Buzogány, A. (2014). Post-Accession Policy-Making in Bulgaria and Romania: Can Non-state Actors Use EU Rules to Promote Better Governance?. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(1), 139-156.
- Saad-Filho, A. (2013). Mass protests under 'left neoliberalism': Brazil, June-July 2013. *Critical Sociology*, 39(5), 657-669.
- Serbia's Protests Aren't the Beginning of a Balkan Spring. By Aleks Eror. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/19/serbias-protests-arent-the-beginning-of-a-balkan-spring-vucic-stefanovic-protests-belgrade/>
- Themudo, N. S. (2013). Reassessing the impact of civil society: nonprofit sector, press freedom, and corruption. *Governance*, 26(1), 63-89.
- Why Romania's protests have failed to bring about real change? By Daniel Brett – Open University. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2018/09/19/why-romania-s-protests-have-failed-to-bring-about-real-change/>

## Week 11: Elections: Why People Vote for Corrupt Politicians? (discussion seminar)

Students should sign up to prepare one of the readings below.

- Anduiza, E., A. Gallego, and J. Muñoz (2013) Turning a Blind Eye: Experimental Evidence of Partisan Bias in Attitudes Toward Corruption. *Comparative Political Studies* 46 (12): 1664–1692. doi:10.1177/0010414013489081
- Bauhr, M., & Charron, N. (2018). Insider or Outsider? Grand Corruption and Electoral Accountability. *Comparative Political Studies*, 51(4), 415–446. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414017710258>
- Chong, A., De La O, A. L., Karlan, D., & Wantchekon, L. (2014). Does corruption information inspire the fight or quash the hope? A field experiment in Mexico on voter turnout, choice, and party identification. *The Journal of Politics*, 77(1), 55-71.
- De Sousa, L., & de Moriconi, M. (2013). Why voters do not throw the rascals out? A conceptual framework for analysing electoral punishment of corruption. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 60, 471-502. doi:10.1007/s10611-013-9483-5
- Jordi Muñoz, Eva Anduiza & Aina Gallego (2016) Why do voters forgive corrupt mayors? Implicit exchange, credibility of information and clean alternatives. *Local Government Studies*, 42:4, 598-615, DOI: 10.1080/03003930.2016.1154847
- Slomczynski, K., & Shabad, G. (2012). Perceptions of political party corruption and voting behaviour in Poland. *Party Politics*, 18(6), 897–917. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068810393266>
- Stockemer, D., LaMontagne, B., & Scruggs, L. (2013). Bribes and ballots: The impact of corruption on voter turnout in democracies. *International Political Science Review*, 34, 74-90. doi:10.1177/0192512111419824
- Sundström, A., & Stockemer, D. (2015). Regional variation in voter turnout in Europe: The impact of corruption perceptions. *Electoral Studies*, 40, 158-169. doi:10.1016/j.electstud.2015.08.006
- Winters, M. S., & Weitz-Shapiro, R. (2013). Lacking information or condoning corruption: When do voters support corrupt politicians? *Comparative Politics*, 45, 418-436. doi:10.5129/001041513X13815259182857

## Week 12: Wrap up

- No new readings for this class
- Conclusions