Why are some countries well-governed while others are poorly governed? This is, arguably, the central question of political science. Certainly, it is a central question for policymakers. And yet, it is one that our discipline does not have a clear answer to. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the discipline has many answers to this question, with no clear consensus on their relative weight and validity.

We begin with the concept of governance, along with various approaches to measurement. The rest of the semester is devoted to factors or mechanisms that are commonly thought to affect the quality of governance. These fall into several categories: (a) incidental, (b) socioeconomic, (c) sociological, and (d) political. Our emphasis will be on the latter.

Our attention will also be focused primarily at the national level, though quite obviously the aggregate quality of governance in a country is a product of its governance at multiple levels (national, regional, local).

We will not discuss international influences on the quality of governance, e.g., war, colonialism, trade, aid, international institutions. Nor will we pay much attention to foreign policy as an output. The course is about domestic sources of governance and domestic governance outcomes.

**Requirements.** The course is open to advanced undergraduate and graduate students. Class size is limited so as to preserve the seminar format. There are no pre-requisites. However, it will be a challenging course for those without some background in comparative politics. You should also be aware that this class will require a good deal of time and effort on your part. If you are unable to make this commitment you may be happier in a different course.

**Protocol.** Most class meetings will proceed roughly as follows. I will offer a brief overview/lecture of the subject at hand. I will then open up discussion, building on the lecture and the readings assigned for that day.

Please arrive on time. Do not read, sleep, or chat with your neighbors. Be respectful of others in your comments. Do not leave until class is dismissed. Use the locution “like” only when comparing things – not, like, when pausing in the middle of a sentence.

**Academic Conduct.** Plagiarism or cheating of any kind (e.g., consulting notes during a closed-book exam) is strictly forbidden. Please be aware of the following Boston University policy: “All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be ‘…expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the dean.’”

**Absences, Extensions.** Students are expected to take exams and complete written work at their scheduled times. No excused absences or extensions will be given without documentation of medical, religious or personal reasons, or official Boston University business. If you will be missing additional classes for religious reasons you must inform me of these dates during the first week of class; otherwise, I cannot excuse your absence.

**Grades.** Grades will be based on three components, weighted equally: (a) class participation (including regular attendance); (b) in-class pop quizzes (to ensure that folks are doing the reading carefully); (c) a paper;
and (d) a final exam.

**PAPER.** You will write one 10-page paper for the course. (I am not concerned with the number of pages in the paper, so do not strain to alter the format to achieve the number 10.) The topic will be chosen from one of the subjects listed below in the syllabus. This means that each of you will pursue a different topic and will become an expert in a somewhat different area of governance. You will also serve as discussant for that day’s session.

Nota bene: there must be an argument (a thesis) to your paper; do not simply enumerate who said what. You needn’t integrate all the material raised in the various readings, much less the wealth of material on the chosen subject. Rather, your goal should be to identify a particularly interesting issue within that area of governance. One possible point of focus would be a salient debate in the field. How do you understand this debate? (What lies beneath it?) Can you find a way to reconcile the different perspectives?

For general advice on essay writing, please consult the document that I have posted on my web page: www.bu.edu/polisci/people/faculty/gerring/ Further details will be discussed in class.

In the last two sessions of the semester I may ask you – or at least some of you – to present your work to the class.

**PARTICIPATION.** I expect active participation from all students in every session. I do not wish to lecture extensively, though I will do a bit of lecturing every week (more or less depending upon the topic). Nor do I intend to act as quiz-master, in the fashion of Harvard Law courses -- though I will play this role if necessary. I am hoping that the discussants will relieve me of this burden. You must participate regularly and intelligently in order to get a top grade in this class. Shyness, or unfamiliarity with the English language, is no excuse. This is a talking profession. Yadayadayada.

However, do not think of participation simply as a matter of “saying something.” There are insightful comments and questions, and then there is irrelevant drivel. You know what I’m getting at. Be especially judicious in the use of anecdotes drawn from your personal life. We all have stories, but these are not always relevant to the subject matter. (Granted, some students may have lived in the developing world or worked for an organization involved in the developing world. Stories drawn from these contexts may be very relevant.)

Let me say a word about my own responses to your comments. You should realize that any professor who incorporates discussion into classroom activity is in a somewhat awkward position. I want to encourage open and frank discussion, but I must also be sure to correct any misperceptions that arise from such discussion. If a comment is factually or logically wrong it is my duty to call attention to this, of no one else does. The purpose is not to embarrass the speaker but simply to clarify the point – for that person and for everyone else, many of whom may share the confusion. Making mistakes is part of the learning experience. If you do not allow yourself to make mistakes you are preventing yourself from learning. I make mistakes all the time. There is nothing wrong with a wrong answer. Oftentimes, the most productive sort of answer or question is one that reveals what is not clear in people’s minds. It is problematic, however, if your answer reveals that you have not done the assigned reading or that you have not been paying attention to previous class discussions.

Everyone will sign up as a discussant for one session of the class; your choice will be in accordance with your choice of a paper topic, as discussed below. (Because of the size of this class we may need to double up for a few sessions.) Your job is to help lead class discussion, with me, for that meeting. In class, you should raise questions, try to answer questions and correct mistakes (or at least offer your own opinion), and in general to ensure that everyone understands the issues raised by the readings for that week. I must emphasize, this does not let others off the hook for doing careful and critical reading. No free-riding.

Please be attentive to standard rules of decorum: avoid dogmatism, respect others’ views, and try to move class discussion forward (pay attention to what others say and respond to the previous point). We will observe the 1-finger/2-finger rule. When you raise two fingers it means that your comment follows directly upon the preceding point.

**READING.** *= Assigned readings drawn from books to be purchased or articles available on the www. **= Assigned readings posted on the Courseinfo web site.
There is a lot of reading for this class. I have tried to identify articles, rather than books, because the former are usually accessible on the web and offer a more condensed form of presentation. Still, the articles are densely packed and therefore will take some time to digest.

Make sure you allot sufficient time to do the reading prior to class. This is essential in order to make the class work, for you and for me. If you haven’t done the reading ahead of time you will not be able to participate in class discussion and it will be difficult for you to follow my mini-lectures. Most important, you won’t be integrating the material in a sequential fashion.

In order to encourage everyone to do the reading (and reward those who do), there will be regular pop quizzes. Typically, I flip a coin at the beginning of class; if it turns up heads we have a quiz on the reading assigned for that day and/or on points touched upon in the previous class. Grading rules: a missed quiz constitutes an F for that quiz. The worst quiz grade over the course of the semester is automatically dropped, so you have one free pass.

Note that you need not read every sentence and footnote in a reading assignment. Read strategically. If you don’t know how to do this already, I hope that you will learn over the course of the semester. Here are some hints: Think about the role of the reading in the context of the course: what’s most important? What is the author’s main argument(s)? How strong is the evidence? Good reading is not just a matter of memorizing arguments but also a matter of analysis. I want you to read critically, to be active consumers of social science. How convinced are you of the argument? Have the counter-arguments been adequately addressed? How else might one approach this subject matter? It is more important to have thought about the material than to have read every sentence in an assignment.

**ADDITIONAL READING.** All unmarked readings (those without an asterisk) listed below are recommended, i.e., optional. Many of these readings may be available on the web. For further suggestions, speak with me.

For daily news of the world, try the *New York Times* (available on the web) or the *BBC World News*, available on TV, radio, or on-line. For the on-line version of the NYT, make sure you click on “International News” and then on “All Headlines” or on the region of the world that you are most interested in learning about. Likewise, when navigating the BBC on the web click through to some particular region of the world to get all available stories.

For weekly news of the world, I suggest subscribing to *The Economist* if you can afford it (there may be student specials). It has a distinct point of view but is perhaps the only weekly with extensive coverage of the world. The prose is engaging and the articles are short and to the point. You may also want to sign up for e-newsletters from the Bank: [http://newsletters.worldbank.org](http://newsletters.worldbank.org).

**TO PURCHASE.**

Consider moving sections on specific institutions (electoral rules) to the front of the semester, so that students have some familiarity with them.

**TBA**  
*Governance: Definition and Measurement*

**TBA**  
*Political Institutions and Mechanisms: An Overview*
Economic Factors

Discussant:

Modernization (Economic development, Urbanization, Education):


Resource Curse:

Revenue:

EqualitY

Discussant:


Urban Bias:

State formation, Statebuilding

Discussant:

Evans, Peter B.; Dietrich Rueschemeyer; Theda Skocpol (eds). 1985. *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


Institutionalization, Rule of law, Constitutionalism, Professionalism, Expertise

Discussant:

TBA  Democracy: the empirical evidence reviewed

Discussant:
Freedom in the World web site

TBA  Electoral competition; Vertical Accountability; Political parties

Discussant:
**Schumpeter, Joseph. “Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy.” In Democracy Sourcebook pp. 5-11.

TBA  Executives: Parliamentary/Presidential

Discussant:
*Gerring, John; Strom C. Thacker; Carola Moreno. 2009. “Are Parliamentary Systems Better?” Comparative Political Studies 42:3 (March) 327-59.

TBA  Electoral Systems

Discussant:
skim the country case studies


**BU Monday**

**Responsiveness, Populism, Time-horizons, Insulation, Horizontal accountability**

*Discussant:*


**Media**

*Discussant:*

**Transparency**

*Discussant:*
Humphreys, Macartan; Jeremy Weinstein. In process. “Parliamentary Accountability in Uganda.” [Field experiment in which score cards for MPs are made public and responses among MPs and the public are observed.]

**Deliberation**

*Discussant:*
Deliberation:


Humphreys, Macartan; William A. Masters; Martin E. Sandbu. 2006. “The Role of Leaders in Democratic Deliberations: Results from a Field Experiment in Sao Tome and Principe.” *World Politics* 58 (July) 583-622.


*TBA Learning, Diffusion*

*Discussant:


*TBA Heterogeneity*

*Discussant:


*TBA Size*


*TBA Descriptive Representation*

*Discussant:


**Spring Break**

**TBA Social capital, Civil society, Generalized Trust**

*Discussant:*


**TBA Participation**

*Discussant:*

Voting and Citizenship:


**TBA Local Governance**

*Discussant:*

Common-Pool Resources (local-level):

Rationality and Society 2:3 (July) 335-358.

TBA (De)Centralization (fiscal federalism, veto points)
Discussant:

Legitimacy, Political Trust
Discussant:

Clientelism; Corruption
Discussant:
*Treisman, Daniel. 2007. “What Have We Learned About the Causes of Corruption from Ten Years of Cross-
TBA  **Coordination, Collective action, Transaction costs, Property rights**

**Discussant:**

TBA  **First draft of paper due (by email attachment)**

TBA  **The Public Sector/Bureaucracy**

**Discussant:**

**Public Administration:**


**Privatization, Size of Public Sector:**


**Weberian organization:**


TBA  **Synthesis**


Madison, James, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay. *Federalist* # 10, 47, 48, 51, 70. [You should be able to find these on the web if you do not have a hard copy in your possession.]


TBA  **BU Monday**

TBA  **Presentations**

If time allows, each student will be asked to present their work to the class, complete with Powerpoint slides.

TBA  **Synthesis**
ADDITIONAL FACTORS

Critical junctures, path dependence

Leadership
Humphreys, Macartan; William A. Masters; Martin E. Sandbu. 2006. “The Role of Leaders in Democratic Deliberations: Results from a Field Experiment in Sao Tome and Principe.” World Politics 58 (July) 583-622.

Values, norms

Unions, Corporatism
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Web Sites
ACE project (sponsored by IFES; electoral systems, democracy)
   http://www.aceproject.org/main/english/default.htm
Designing better electoral systems  http://www.uiowa.edu/~electdis/
EPIC project (electoral systems, democracy)  http://www.epicproject.org/
IDEA (electoral systems, participation, democracy) http://www.idea.int/index.htm
Electoral systems (Wallack et al)  www.stanford.edu/~jseddon/
Electionworld.org (elections around the world) http://electionworld.org/
Electionresources.org (elections) http://electionresources.org/
Parties and elections in Europe http://www.parties-and-elections.de/indexe.html
Elections and electoral systems in post-Soviet countries http://www.essex.ac.uk/elections/
Political database of the Americas http://www.georgetown.edu/pdbs/Elecdatas/elecdatas.html
Electoral Institute of Southern Africa http://www.eisa.org.za/
Links to other election resources http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/election.htm
Harvard CID/World Bank datamart http://paradocs.pols.columbia.edu:8080/datavine/MainFrameSet.jsp
Constitution finder http://confinder.richmond.edu/
International constitutional law http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/jel/index.html
Country watch http://www.countrywatch.com/
Fraser Institute (economic freedom measures) http://www.freetheworld.com/index.html
Economic performance datasets http://www.nuff.ox.ac.uk/Economics/Growth/datasets.htm
Economist Intelligence Unit, country briefings http://www.economist.com/countries/index.cfm
Environmental sustainability indices http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/indicators/ESI/
Pardoe Center, Project on Human Development http://humandevelopment.bu.edu/
Freedom House (freedom indices) http://www.freedomhouse.org/
Global Burden of Disease http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/burdenofdisease/
ICPSR (largest collection of political science data; BU has subscription) http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/
International Labour Organization (ILO; info on social security, labor agreements, et al.)
   http://www.ilo.org/
Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU; info on electoral systems, parliaments, parties, election law)
   http://www.ipu.org/
Web sites of national parliaments http://wc.wustl.edu/parliaments.html
Mishpat.net (legal, constitutional, human rights info) http://mishpat.net/law/Countries/
International Comparative Political Parties Project (Ken Janda) http://janda.org/icpp/
Minorities at Risk (minorities around the world) http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/
OECD statistics http://www.oecd.org/home/
Paul Hensel's international data site http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/~phensel/intndata.html#intpol
PoliSci.com (a subscription site, but I think there's some free stuff) http://www.policsci.com/
Polity IV dataset (democracy and other related stuff) http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/polity/index.htm
Richard Jensen's guide to historical and crossnational data http://tigger.uic.edu/~ri Jensen/index.html
UCSD data search http://odwin.ucsd.edu/idata/
State Dept background notes on countries http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/index.html
World Health Organization (WHO) http://www.who.int/whosis/menu.cfm
Transparency International (corruption indices) http://www.transparency.org/
Comparative Dataset on Political Institutions (Persson, Tabellini) www.sns.se
Cross-National Time-Series (CNTS) Data Archive (Banks) www.databanks.sitehosting.net/index.htm
Database on Political Institutions (DPI, Keefer et al.)
   http://netec.mcc.ac.uk/WoPEC/data/Papers/wopwobago2283.html
Female political representation (IDEA) http://www.idea.int/quota/index.cfm
   Also IPU http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm
State failure task force (an IR dataset) www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/stfail/sfldata.htm
Political terror scale (Mark Gibney) http://www.unca.edu/politicalscience/faculty-staff/gibney.html
Incarceration rates www.kel.ac.uk/depsta-rel/ieps/
Nationmaster www.Nationmaster.com