

## **Grading guidelines for STV1300**

### **Spring 2023**

Students answer 4 out of 6 short-answer questions and 1 out of 2 long-answer questions.

Short-answer questions are 40% of the grade (10% each). An unanswered question gets F. The total grade for the short-answer questions is an average of the four answers. Getting an F on one short-answer question does not result in F for the exam, as it can average out depends on the grade for the other responses to the short-answer questions.

Long-answer question is 60% of the grade.

The total grade is a weighted average between the grade for the short-answer questions and the grade for the long-answer question.

### **Short-answer questions**

#### **Question 1. How can party systems differ? Name and describe at least three characteristics of party systems.**

*Key reading: Enyedi & Bértoa (2020)*

A good answer will mention that the main characteristics or dimensions of party systems are party system fractionalization, polarization, institutionalization (closure), or volatility (any combination of three out of these four). A good answer will also provide a basic definition of these: that fractionalization means the number of parties, polarization means ideological distance between parties, institutionalization means stability of party system, same is closure, volatility means “citizens’ changing decisions of whom to vote for and whether to vote at all, and from the decision of party elites about party labels: whether to keep them, abandon them, or merge them”. A very good answer will add a more detailed description of various dimensions, potentially talk about effective number of parties as a way to measure fractionalization. An excellent answer will also mention the consequences of various characteristics of party systems for the ease of government formation and stability.

#### **Question 2. What are the pros and cons of a dichotomous (binary) measure of democracy?**

*Key reading: Clark, Golder and Golder (2018), chapter 5*

All measures described in the readings and lectures rely on the Dahlian conception of democracy (that is, contestation and inclusion). Whilst only very good answers will point to this fact, all good answers will consider how to best *measure or operationalize* the concept of democracy. Distinguishing between concepts and measurement is therefore key. Some coverage of defining democracy is also expected. The binary measure covered in CGG is the Democracy-Dictatorship Measure by Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland. This is a measure based on a procedural/minimalist conception of democracy that does not employ the Dahlian inclusion dimension. The binary nature of the measure is based on the understanding that,

e.g., uncontested regimes like North Korea, cannot have a “degree of democracy”. Of course, continuous measures as well as more maximalist concepts, makes measurement more nuanced and does claim that picking up more miniscule differences in democracy levels is meaningful. Good answers pick up some of these aspects while very good answers cover the debate more completely.

**Question 3. Describe at least two important explanations of why civil wars occur.**

*Key readings: Cederman, Weidmann, and Gleditsch (2011) (online); Fearon and Laitin (2003) (online); Fjelde, Knutsen and Nygård (2021) (online)*

The complete list of causes as they were itemized in lecture were:

1. Reasons: inequality and grievances (Cederman, Weidmann, and Gleditsch 2011)
2. Resources: opportunities and the state (Fearon and Laitin (2003))
3. Regimes: democracy and commitment problems (Fjelde, Knutsen and Nygård (2021))

Answers need not use these names/titles, but students must be able to describe them so that they are recognizable. Example of a civil war definition (which good or very answers will provide): “a violent conflict within a country fought by organized groups that aim to take power at the center or in a region, or to change government policies“. Short descriptions of each cause should include; for “Reasons”, *economic inequalities that overlap with factions make it dangerous, that is relative deprivation*”; for “Resources”, *It’s not sufficient to have reasons for war, but you also need to be able to wage war. Two factors shape this ability: State capacity and material resources*, for “Regimes”, *weak institutions in the form of either low horizontal or vertical constraints create commitment problems, so there is little civil war in democracies, but also in closed autocracies*. Illustration of the arguments either by example case or hypotheticals are a plus.

**Question 4. What is a “credible commitment problem”? Illustrate your answer with at least one example.**

*Key reading: Clark, Golder and Golder (2018), chapter 6*

In CGG, the clear definition is given as “A credible commitment problem (or a time-inconsistency problem), occurs when (a) and actor who makes a promise today may have an incentive to renege on that promise in the future and (b) power is in the hands of the actor who makes the promise and not in the hands of those expected to benefit from the promise.” Good answers will cover the expectation of return that lies in the future (time-dimension) and the power-imbalance between the actors (hierarchy). The credible commitment problem is used to illustrate how dictators are sometimes forced to reform their institutions. It also illustrates the potential for economic stagnation in autocracies. Examples can point to these debates, to solutions to these problems (repeated interactions,

enforceable contracts), or to stylized examples like the King trying to borrow money from the gentry (as described in CGG). Answers that tie their examples to the debates on democratization and/or the relationship between democracy and the economy should be rewarded.

**Question 5. What is a legislative responsibility, how is it exercised, and in which types of democracies does it exist?**

*Key reading: Clark, Golder and Golder (2018), chapter 12*

A good answer will mention that legislative responsibility means “that a legislative majority has the constitutional power to remove the government from office without cause”, that the legislative responsibility exists in parliamentary democracies and that it is exercised through the vote of no confidence. A very good answer will also mention that legislative responsibility also exists in premier-presidential democracies and define what premier-presidential democracies are. An excellent answer will in addition expand on what vote of no confidence means (“a vote in the legislature on whether the government should remain in office”), and also, possibly, that there can be a constructive vote of no confidence (which implies a suggestion of “who will replace the government if incumbent loses a vote of no confidence”). An outstanding answer would also mention vote of confidence initiated by the governments, but it is not necessary for an A.

**Question 6. What is a social cleavage and how are social cleavages reflected in the party competition? Provide a couple of examples.**

*Key reading: Clark, Golder and Golder (2018), chapter 14, Caramani (2017), Chapter 13.*

A good answer will define a social cleavage as a social division around a particular issue that create conflicts between social groups (there is no formal definition in the course literature, so answers will vary around this idea), name some of the main social cleavages in Western Europe (center-periphery cleavage, state-church cleavage, confessional cleavage between protestants and catholics, rural-urban cleavage, workers-employees cleavage or cleavage between socialists and capitalists, materialism-post-materialism cleavage, globalization cleavage, etc.), and mention that party competition is often structured around social cleavages. For example, workers-employees cleavage is reflected in the competition between parties on the left and right of the political spectrum. A very good answer will expand on what the mentioned social cleavages are about more in depth, explaining the nature of the divisions. An excellent answer will in addition mention the dimensions of the definition of social cleavages by Lipset and Rokkan, emphasizing that the divided groups should have socio-structural foundation (empirical element), collective identity (normative element), and be organized (an organizational element) to be considered a social cleavage. An outstanding answer will add that the view of what cleavages are has been criticized and applying Lipset and Rokkan’s strict definition will overlook important cleavages that are not so visible, although this critical addition is not necessary for an A.

It is also ok if answers mention other cleavage examples from non-Western countries, such as ethnic or linguistic cleavage or corruption-anti-corruption cleavage.



### ***Long-answer questions***

**Question 1. Some argue that democracy is caused by economic development. Critically discuss this argument.**

*Key readings: Clark, Golder and Golder (2018), chapters 6 and 7; Haerpfer, Bernhagen, Inglehart and Welzel (2018): Chapter 9; Lipset (1959)*

The purpose of this questions is to let students show they are familiar with the main tenants of modernization theory and the various ways in which the economy impacts prospects for democratization. Good answers will describe how the economy can contribute to democratization via different mechanisms (industrialization, education, Maslow etc) and point to at least one counter argument to a causal interpretation (such as democratic survival). Very good answers try to demarcate between different mechanisms and draw on, e.g., the distance of the economic explanations to the causal outcome and possible reverse causality to discuss.

The key literature to cover here is how scholars have explained the correlation between economic development and level of democracy. One possibility is “modernization theory”. Here, economic development correlates with level of democracy because it affects both “democratization” (i.e. transition to democracy) and “democratic survival”. The many mechanisms include transformations in richer economies (i.e agrarian society -> industrialization -> post-industrialization) and associated educational and value changes that support democracy.

A contrast to the causal explanation is the so-called “survival story”, under which economic development correlates with level of democracy only because richer democracies are more likely to remain democratic than poor ones. The invoked mechanisms here are “rationalist” and typically based on the idea that it is more irrational to abandon democracy in rich countries. For example, more actors/people might run the risk of losing great assets in a chaotic and possibly violent regime transition. (CGG argues that this does not suffice as a sole explanation and that modernization processes probably provide a more convincing explanation.)

Moreover, economic development might correlate with level of democracy because democracy positively affects economic development. This could be because democracy is associated with rule of law and protection of property rights. (However, CGG argue that the empirical evidence for this causal chain is weak/inconsistent). A final possible explanation is that some third “spurious” factor may explain both economic development and level of democracy (e.g. geographic or cultural factors). (Importantly, it should be clear from CGGs discussion that the relationship is likely not entirely/mainly spurious.)

To provide a good answer one needs to understand the difference between correlation and causation, and briefly indicate what different theoretical possibilities are about and how they might account for the correlation in question. Answers might vary in terms of how concisely theories are presented (and compared). Modernization theory is probably what

most will think of first. Those who mention and explain both modernization theory and survival theory should be rewarded. If you also mention the reverse causal relationship (effect of regime type on economic development), it is a plus.

**Question 2. You are hired as a consultant for a newly formed democratic country that needs to choose an electoral system. Would you recommend majoritarian or proportional representation system and why? Compare the two and discuss their pros and cons**

*Key Reading: Clark, Golder and Golder (2018), chapter 13*

A good answer will define majoritarian and proportional representation electoral systems and describe several advantages and disadvantages of both.

Main advantages of PR:

- Seen as fair: all votes count equally in principle
- Produce more representative outcomes: more female and minority representatives
- Weaker incentive for “strategic voting”
- People reveal their true preferences

Main disadvantages of PR:

- More complicated to understand
- Stimulate multiparty systems and coalition governments
- More complicated chain of delegation and accountability
- Small parties get more influence; weakens efficiency of government?

Main advantages of Majoritarian:

- Simple, easy to understand
- Clear chain of delegation and accountability

Main disadvantages of Majoritarian

- Seen as unfair
- Seen as unrepresentative
- Incentivizes strategic voting
- Does not reveal voters’ true preferences

The choice of the system will be motivated by a simple discussion of advantages of one system outweighing its own disadvantages and advantages of the other.

A very good answer will add that majoritarian and PR systems have various options and those have their own advantages and disadvantages. The answer will name some (not necessarily all) sub-types of electoral systems. Especially important for B to name several types of majoritarian systems – that they can be absolute majority systems and plurality systems, as the advantages and disadvantages vary between those. The answer will also discuss advantages and disadvantages with the presented electoral system types, more in

detail than just naming them. The choice of the system will be motivated by a critical discussion of advantages and disadvantages of majoritarian and PR electoral systems, weighing advantages and disadvantages carefully.

An excellent answer will, in addition to the above, critically discuss advantages and disadvantages of various sub-types of PR and majoritarian systems. Subtypes of absolute majority systems discussed in class are alternative vote and two-round run-offs for presidential elections; sub-types of plurality systems discussed in class are FPTP or SMDP and SNTV. Subtypes of PR are list PR (open or closed) and STV. All mentioned terms and electoral systems types and subtypes should be explained. However, it is not necessary that the answer mentions all subtypes of majoritarian and PR, mentioning some key sub-types to make a point is enough. Providing a nuanced discussion of not only two types of electoral systems, but their sub-types, together with a nuanced discussion of their pros and cons, is an asset for an answer that will justify the highest grade if done well.