

Political Science 490
Problems of Federalism
Northwestern University
Fall 2007

Professor: Edward Gibson
Time: Thursdays 2-4:50 pm
Place: Ripton Room, Scott Hall

At the most basic level federalism is a way of organizing a country territorially. Why should this matter so much to politics? This seminar will address this question and will explore its implications in several domains. These will include the interconnections between federalism and democracy, federalism and political order, federalism and economics, and federalism and institutional development. We will also explore theoretical debates about federalism's institutional structure, how it evolves, and how it shapes important political outcomes.

"Comparative federalism" has become a rather hot topic in political science, and like most "hot" topics, it is marked by considerable conceptual confusion and massive amounts of information that are only partially made sense of by theory. By the end of this seminar you should have an idea of the state of the debate in this field, and you will also have a good sense of just how much more needs to be done.

Course requirements: The most important assignment is a research paper of about 20 pages that applies some of the theoretical literatures we address to a country (or countries) of your choice. However, participation in class discussions and short written assignments that show a critical grappling with the readings will also be important. Here is the breakdown:

Weekly requirements: Timely reading of weekly assignments and active participation in seminar discussion. Students will turn in a commentary on the weekly readings to be submitted at the beginning of each class. The commentaries are intended to help you unify the readings and raise questions for class discussion. They can consist of 2 or more questions on the readings, or a more general set of comments. The commentaries should reflect a critical analysis of the readings. As the semester progresses, they should reflect an 'accumulated wisdom,' that is, issues raised in earlier weeks should be brought in to challenge or analyze the current week's readings. Each student will turn in 5 commentaries in the quarter (including the week(s) for which oral presentations are made). They should be NO MORE than one and a half to two pages double-spaced. The instructor will evaluate these on a scale of "excellent, good, fair, poor."

Student presentations: Five-minute oral presentations on selected readings to initiate class discussion (the number of presentations for each student will depend on class size). Note: the presentations are not to be a summary of the readings (everyone will have read the assigned

pieces), but a set of comments or questions to get discussion rolling. This norm will be enforced ruthlessly by the instructor.

Final research paper. This assignment will be an opportunity for you to delve into a country, region, or topic that is of interest to you, applying the theoretical questions we will be discussing in the class. Basically, this assignment will be about exploring problems of federalism within an empirical context or larger theoretical debate that is of interest to you. The paper should be between 20 to 30 pages in length. It will be due on Friday, December 7.

Approximate grade distribution: class participation, weekly questions, and oral presentations: 50 percent. Final assignment: 50 percent.

The following books have been ordered for purchase (and are at Norris):

Edward L. Gibson, ed., *Federalism and Democracy in Latin America*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (2004).

Mikhail Filippov, Peter C. Ordeshook, Olga Shvetsova, *Designing Federalism: A Theory of Self-Sustainable Federal Institutions*, New York: Cambridge University Press (2004).

Robert Dahl, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* New Haven: Yale University Press (2001).

Jonathan A. Rodden, *Hamilton's Paradox: The Promise and Peril of Fiscal Federalism*, New York: Cambridge University Press (2006).

Most assigned journal articles will either be posted on our courseinfo website or are available as downloads from Northwestern's library ("electronic resources"). In some cases where book sections or chapters are assigned, we will arrange to have them available for photocopying.

September 27: Introduction

October 4: What is Federalism? And why should we care?

Readings:

William Riker, "A Theory of Federalism," and "The Origin and Purposes of Federalism," Chapters 1 and 2 of *Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co.(1964).

Edward Gibson, "Federalism and Democracy: Theoretical Connections and Cautionary Insights." Chapter 1 of Edward L. Gibson, ed., *Federalism and Democracy in Latin America*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (2004).

Alfred Stepan, "Toward a New Comparative Politics of Federalism, Multinationalism, and Democracy: Beyond Rikerian Federalism." Chapter 2 of Edward L. Gibson, ed., *Federalism and Democracy in Latin America*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (2004).

Jan Erk, "Comparative Federalism as a Growth Industry." Book review in *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, volume 37 number 2 (2007), pp. 262-278.

Ronald L. Watts, Chapters 1 and 2 of *Comparing Federal Systems*, Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press (1999). Chapter 2 serves mainly as a useful reference source with information of several federal countries.

October 11: "Designing" Federal Systems: A rational-normative approach to understanding federalism:

Readings:

Mikhail Filippov, Peter C. Ordeshook, Olga Shvetsova, *Designing Federalism: A Theory of Self-Sustainable Federal Institutions*, New York: Cambridge University Press (2004).

October 18: Federalism and Democracy: A view from the United States

Readings:

Robert Dahl, *How Democratic is the American Constitution?* New Haven: Yale University Press (2001).

October 25: Fiscal Federalism

Readings:

Jonathan A. Rodden, *Hamilton's Paradox: The Promise and Peril of Fiscal Federalism*, New York: Cambridge University Press (2006).

Recommended:

"Symposium: The New Political Economy of Decentralization and Federalism," *APSA-CP Newsletter*, Winter (2000).

November 1: Origins and Evolution of Federalism (“Big Bang” theories and transitions from unitary states to federalism).

Readings:

- Edward Gibson and Tulia Falleti, “Regional Conflict and the Origins of Argentine Federalism,” Chapter 7 of Edward L. Gibson, ed., *Federalism and Democracy in Latin America*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (2004).
- Daniel Ziblatt, “Rethinking the Origins of Federalism Puzzle, Theory, and Evidence from Nineteenth-Century Europe,” *World Politics* 57.1 (2004) 70-98.
- Pablo Beramendi and Ramón Máiz, “Spain: Unfulfilled Federalism (1978-1996). Chapter 4 in Ugo M. Amoretti and Nancy Bermeo, *Federalism and Territorial Cleavages*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins (2004).
- Mark Smyrl: “France: Challenging the Unitary State.” Chapter 7 in Ugo M. Amoretti and Nancy Bermeo, *Federalism and Territorial Cleavage*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins (2004).
- Rui J. P. de Figueiredo, Michael McFaul, and Barry Weingast, “Constructing Self-Enforcing Federalism in the Early United States and Modern Russia,” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, volume 37 number 2 (2007), pp.160-189.

November 8: Multinationalism and Federalism

Readings:

- Alfred Stepan, “Modern Multinational Democracies: Transcending a Gellnerian Oxymoron,” Chapter 9 in Alfred Stepan, *Arguing Comparative Politics*, New York: Oxford (2001).
- Ugo Amoretti, “Federalism and Territorial Cleavages,” Chapter 1 in Ugo M. Amoretti and Nancy Bermeo, *Federalism and Territorial Cleavages*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins (2004).
- Nancy Bermeo, “The Merits of Federalism,” Chapter 17 in Ugo M. Amoretti and Nancy Bermeo, *Federalism and Territorial Cleavages*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins (2004).
- Valerie Bunce, “Federalism, Nationalism, and Secession: The Communist and Post-Communist Experience,” Chapter 15 in Ugo M. Amoretti and Nancy Bermeo, *Federalism and Territorial Cleavages*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins (2004).
- Henry Hale, “Divided We Stand: Institutional Sources of Ethnofederal State Survival and Collapse,” *World Politics*, volume 56 number 4 (2004), p165-193.
- Louise Tillin, “United in Diversity? Asymmetry in Indian Federalism.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* volume 37 number 1 (2006), pp. 45-67.

November 15: Federalism, Coalition-Building, and Policy-Making (boy, does federalism “matter”):

Readings:

- Alfred Stepan, "Electorally Generated Veto Players in Unitary and Federal Systems," Chapter 10 of Edward L. Gibson, ed., *Federalism and Democracy in Latin America*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (2004).
- Richard Snyder and David Samuels, "Legislative Malapportionment in Latin America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives," Chapter 4 of Edward L. Gibson, ed., *Federalism and Democracy in Latin America*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (2004).
- Edward Gibson and Ernesto Calvo, "Federalism and Low-Maintenance Constituencies: Territorial Dimensions of Economic Reform in Argentina," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, volume 35 number 3 (2000).
- Jeannette Money and George Tsebelis, "Cicero's Puzzle: Upper House Power in Comparative Perspective," *International Political Science Review*, volume 13, number 1 (1992).
- Scott Mainwaring and David Samuels, "Strong Federalism, Constraints on the Central Government, and Economic Reform in Brazil," Chapter 3 of Edward L. Gibson, ed., *Federalism and Democracy in Latin America*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (2004).
- Andrew Konitzer and Stephen K. Wegren, "Federalism and Political Recentralization in the Russian Federation: United Russia as the Party of Power." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* volume 36 number 4 (2006), pp. 503–522.

Recommended:

- Cameron Ross, "Federalism and Electoral Authoritarianism under Putin." *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, volume 13 number 3 (2005).

November 29: Federalism and Political Parties

Readings:

- Pradeep Chhibber and Ken Kollman, Introduction to *The Formation of National Party Systems*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press (2004).
- Edward Gibson and Julieta Suarez Cao, "Competition and Power in Federalized Party Systems," CHSS Working Paper (2007).
- Kent Weaver, "Electoral Rules and Party Systems in Federations," Chapter 8 in Ugo M. Amoretti and Nancy Bermeo, *Federalism and Territorial Cleavages*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (2004).
- David Samuels, Introduction and Chapter 1 of *Ambition, Federalism, and Legislative Politics in Brazil*, New York: Cambridge University Press (2003).
- David Samuels, "To Paraphrase Riker, 'Six Articles in Search of a Subject.' On the Political Economy of Decentralization and Federalism." *APSA-CP* 11 (Summer 2000).

Michael Penfold Becerra, "Federalism and Institutional Change in Venezuela," Chapter 6 of Edward L. Gibson, ed., *Federalism and Democracy in Latin America*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (2004).

Juan Olmeda and Julieta Suarez Cao, "The Federal Connection: Institutional Strategies and the Development of Conservative Parties in Mexico and Argentina," Paper delivered at the MPSA conference (2007).

December 4: Democratization and Federalism

Enrique Ochoa Reza, "Multiple Arenas of Struggle: Federalism and Mexico's Transition to Democracy," Chapter 8 of Edward L. Gibson, ed., *Federalism and Democracy in Latin America*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (2004).

David Samuels and Fernando Luiz Abrucio "Federalism and Democratic Transitions: The "New" Politics of the Governors in Brazil," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 30(2):43-62 (2000).

Carol Skalnik Leff, "Democratization and Disintegration in Multinational States: The Breakup of the Communist Federations," in *World Politics* volume 51 (1999).

Edward Gibson, "Boundary Control: Subnational Authoritarianism in Democratic Countries," *World Politics* volume 58 (2005).

Edward Gibson, "Of Shields and Swords: Federalism and Territorial Democratization in the United States," manuscript.