



COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

School of Government and Public Policy

School of Government & Public Policy
315 Social Science
P.O. Box 210027
Tucson, AZ 85721-0027
Tel: (520) 621-7600
Fax: (520) 621-5051
<http://sgpp.arizona.edu>

Instructor: Yongfeng Tang

Course: Comparative Politics in the Age of Globalization

Topic: Political Parties and Party Systems

Date of Guest Lecture: April 15, 2025

Observer: Maša Mišćević

Observation Duration: 12:30–1:45 PM

Location: J.P. Schaefer CCP, Room 108

Yongfeng,

Thank you for having me observe your guest lecture on the political parties and the party system. As someone who has never taken a political science course during undergraduate years, I truly enjoyed learning from you! I felt like I belonged in your classroom, and the way you presented the material to us as your students and audience encouraged me to critically think about this newfound knowledge. Two of your approaches helped me with the increased sense of belonging and critical thinking. The first one was to make your lecture content relevant by connecting it to its application in the real world. We often talk about the function of the content, and having your audience be of a voting age, I found using past and current examples of how political parties and their role in governments shape the day-to-day lives of its constituents very informative and important for not only understanding the scholarship of political science, but also making voting decisions that shape our lives both inside and outside of the classroom. The second approach was your effort to define any terms you thought us as your audience was not familiar with, as well as recall any of the previous knowledge and summarize the new one.

I thought you had an enthusiastic presence, and you covered all the bases that make a good first impression of the speaker: you were fluent in your PowerPoint slide content delivery while engaging with the audience with the open body language towards them and making eye contact with your audience, and your lesson had a timely pace. We as guest lecturers face the challenge of not knowing the number of students who will attend our guest lecture and how many of them will be eager to exchange their thoughts and questions with us. Your lesson provided ample opportunities for students to engage with the material and revise the core concept of each section of the lesson. For example, you used low-stake group polling questions at the end of each section explaining one of the roles of the political parties. Having students use a phone application made for easy and smooth participation, as well as allowing for students who may have otherwise been shy to share their thoughts and participate as well. I particularly liked how you read each question and answer options to your audience, followed by an explanation of why a particular answer was right and others were not. These steps inspired me to apply them in my teaching opportunities which occurred in the following weeks, as to me they are a clear example of learner-centered teaching.



You also used collaborative work at the end of the class to show students how to critically think about the advantages and disadvantages of having few versus more political parties in a party system, and very well adapted this activity to the time left, even though it deviated from your original lesson plan. I appreciated you taking your time to walk around the room and ask each group to share their discussion highlights with you, and what I thought was especially clever was how you summarized each group's main thoughts so that the rest of the audience could hear it loud and clear. I believe this would be an excellent strategy to employ in your efforts to increase student engagement by having them ask you questions and respond to your questions, especially if in the future you find yourself in an auditorium-style classroom, such was the one this lecture was presented in. Decreasing the physical distance between the instructor and the students may help students feel more connected to you as their instructor and encourage them to more actively engage with you throughout the lecture. I also loved your initial idea of centering this collaborative activity around the analysis of the party systems of different countries. However, given your lesson objectives, I did not see this specific activity executed. I still think your other prompt was effective in demonstrating effectiveness of political systems based on various number of parties, so my following suggestion could be applied to either prompts. To enhance this collaborative activity design and employ it more seamlessly, I would suggest having a live collaborative document, such as Google Docs, Google Slides or Padlet, where each group can record their thoughts, and which would also have clear instructions and guiding questions. For this example, if you wanted to employ your original collaborative activity question, you could ask collaborative groups to pick one of the countries whose party systems you talked about in the lecture (e.g. China, Great Britain) and list how their political parties and party system complete (or do not!) each of the four roles you discussed throughout the lecture. Time-given, you can limit this list to two out of four roles, maybe even one where they fulfil their role, and one where they do not! To further elevate the experience, you could ask students to assign roles, such as note-taker and presenter. In that way, they will be ready to share their work with the rest of their peers.

Overall, I think you did a wonderful job creating and executing this guest lecture. You employed the scholarship of learner-centered teaching well in your lecture by making presented content relevant to not only the scholarship of political science but also day-to-day lives of your students, as well as provided students with different modalities of engagement with the lecture material, such as group polling questions at the end of each content section to check their understanding of the material and collaborative work to critically think about implications of this knowledge in the world they live in.

Good luck in your future endeavors!

Maša Mišćević

May 5, 2025

