



**University of
Zurich**^{UZH}

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Spezialisierung [615a006a](#): Spring Term 2020

Promises Made, Promises Kept?

Party Competition, Election Pledges, and Policy Outcomes

Last update: February 5, 2020

Term: Spring term 2020
Time: 28/02; 20/03; 08/05; 08:00–12:00
Room: [AFL-E-020](#) (Affolternstr. 56)
ECTS: 15

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Course Content

Do parties keep their promises or are politicians “pledge breakers”? Are promises in certain policy areas more likely to be fulfilled? In what policy areas do parties differ in terms of their positions and issue emphasis? And how can we measure election promises and latent party positions reliably? In this seminar, we will first compare theories of policy-making and connect them with theories of party competition. Second, we discuss different approaches of measuring party positions, political ideology, and the saliency of policy areas in detail. Third, we will analyse in detail how party competition influences policy-making and identify the circumstances under which parties adjust their positions.

The second semester includes an applied introduction to quantitative text analysis in order to classify text into policy areas and measure party positions. The aim of the seminar is the development of an innovative research design that forms the basis for a BA thesis.

Details

- BA “Spezialisierung”
- Language: German
- Grading: Bachelor thesis (100%)

Learning Outcomes

1. Extensive knowledge of central theories of representation, the mandate model of democracy, and party competition.

2. Detailed insights into past and current approaches to study questions about pledge fulfilment, party positions, responsiveness and issue ownership
3. Critical reading and discussing complex academic literature and diverse methodological approaches
4. Planning and writing a research design which forms the basis of the BA thesis, to be written in the second part of the module (FS 2020)

Introductory Readings

The seminar does not build on a single text book, but relies mostly on papers and chapters of books. For a general overview of the course content, I recommend the following books:

- G. Bingham Powell (2000). *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Russell J. Dalton, David M. Farrell, and Ian McAllister (2011). *Political Parties and the Democratic Linkage: How Parties Organize Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver, and Peter Mair (2011). *Representative Government in Modern Europe*. 5th edition. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.
- Andrea Volkens, Judith Bara, Ian Budge, Michael D. McDonald, and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds. (2013). *Mapping Policy Preferences From Texts: Statistical Solutions for Manifesto Data Analysts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Technical Background and Prerequisites

The course requires good knowledge of general approaches and theories of political science and basic prior knowledge with research design and quantitative methods. The following books provide very good introductions to research design and applied quantitative methods.

Research Design and Quantitative Methods

- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- John Gerring (2001). *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten (2019). *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. 3rd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kosuke Imai (2017). *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hadley Wickham and Garrett Grolemund (2017). *R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly.

Academic Writing

- Stephen B. Heard (2016). *The Scientist's Guide to Writing: How to Write More Easily and Effectively Throughout Your Scientific Career*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Syllabus Modification Rights

I reserve the right to reasonably alter the elements of the syllabus at any time by adjusting the reading list to keep pace with the course schedule. Moreover, I may change the content of specific sessions depending on the participants' prior knowledge and research interests.

Expectations and Grading

Students will write a Bachelor thesis which will count towards 100% of this module. The [expectations regarding the BA thesis are provided at the department's website](#) Students must follow the [guidelines for citing academic references](#).

Week 1: Organisation and Introduction (18.09.2019)

- Expectations
- Discussion of syllabus
- Initial information on presentations, the research proposal, and the second term

Mandatory Readings

- Nick Clarke, Will Jennings, Jonathan Moss, and Gerry Stoker (2018). *The Good Politician: Folk Theories, Political Interaction, and the Rise of Anti-Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: ch. 1.

Week 2: Parties and Party Systems (25.09.2019)

- What are political parties?
- What does Lijphart mean by the Westminster Model of Democracy and the Consensus Model of Democracy?
- How can we distinguish between different types of democracies?

Mandatory Readings

- Arend Lijphart (2012). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. 2nd edition. New Haven: Yale University Press: ch. 1–3.

Week 3: Mandate Model of Democracy (02.10.2019)

- What is the 'democratic mandate'?
- How we measure campaign promises/pledges?
- Do parties fulfil their promises?

Mandatory Readings

- Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan C. Stokes (1999). "Elections and Representation". *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Ed. by Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 29–54: 29–40.

- Robert Thomson, Terry J. Royed, Elin Naurin, Joaquín Artés, Rory Costello, Laurenz Ennsner-Jedenastik, Mark Ferguson, Petia Kostadinova, Catherine Moury, François Pétry, and Katrin Praprotnik (2017). [“The Fulfillment of Parties’ Election Pledges: A Comparative Study on the Impact of Power Sharing”](#). *American Journal of Political Science* 61 (3): 527–542.
- Robert Thomson and Heinz Brandenburg (2019). [“Trust and Citizens’ Evaluations of Promise Keeping by Government Parties”](#). *Political Studies* 67 (1): 249–266.