



**University of
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Spezialisierung [615a006a](#): Autumn Term 2019

Promises Made, Promises Kept?

Party Competition, Election Pledges, and Policy Outcomes

Last update: July 16, 2022

Term: Autumn term 2019 (and Spring term 2020)
Time: Wednesday, 10:15–12:00
Room: [AFL-E-020](#) (Affolternstr. 56)
ECTS: 6

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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: English
- Grading: Presentation (‘Referat’ RE): 40%; Research proposal (‘Schriftliche Arbeit’ SA): 60%

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. B. Powell (2000). *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- R. J. Dalton, D. M. Farrell, and I. McAllister (2011). *Political Parties and the Democratic Linkage: How Parties Organize Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- M. Gallagher, M. Laver, and P. Mair (2011). *Representative Government in Modern Europe*. 5th edition. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.
- A. Volkens, J. Bara, I. Budge, M. D. McDonald, and H.-D. 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

- G. King, R. O. Keohane, and S. Verba (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- J. Gerring (2001). *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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- K. Imai (2017). *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- H. Wickham and G. Grolemund (2017). *R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly.

Academic Writing

- S. 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 are expected to read the papers or chapters assigned under **Mandatory Readings**. These readings serve as the basis for in-class discussions about the advantages, disadvantages, and applicability of the various approaches to social science questions. I also add optional readings which will be presented by students during their in-class presentation (see details below).
- Students will prepare a **Presentation** of one of the optional readings. This presentation counts 40% towards the grade for this term. Dates and texts for presentations will be assigned in the third week of the seminar. The presentation includes a brief and concise discussion of the paper or book, with particular reference to the puzzle, research question, hypotheses, and results. The main part of the presentation should be devoted to a critical assessment of the paper. What open questions remain and how has subsequent research addressed these questions? What are weaknesses of the methods or case selection strategy? Are results internally and externally valid and generalisable? And how would you improve or extend the study? The presentations will take in weeks 6–10.
- Students also submit a **Research Proposal** which counts towards 60% of the final grade. The research proposal must not exceed 4,000 words (including bibliography, captions, and footnotes). The proposal should identify a research question, a discussion of the variation to be explained, and the importance of the research question. Moreover, the students should specify observable implications, the measurement and conceptualisation of the dependent and main independent variable, and propose a methodological approach to analyse this question. More details on these aspects and the research design will be provided throughout the seminar. The research design must be submitted via [OLAT](#) as a PDF document before **December 17, 2019 (8:00pm CET)**.

Course Structure (Autumn Term 2019)

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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

- N. Clarke, W. Jennings, J. Moss, and G. 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

- A. 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

- B. Manin, A. Przeworski, and S. C. Stokes (1999). “Elections and Representation”. *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*. Ed. by A. Przeworski, S. C. Stokes, and B. Manin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 29–54: 29–40.
- R. Thomson, T. J. Royed, E. Naurin, J. Artés, R. Costello, L. Ennser-Jedenastik, M. Ferguson, P. Kostadinova, C. Moury, F. Pétry, and K. 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.
- R. Thomson and H. Brandenburg (2019). “Trust and Citizens’ Evaluations of Promise Keeping by Government Parties”. *Political Studies* 67 (1): 249–266.

Week 4: Research Design: Research Question and Dependent Variable (09.10.2019)

- How do we identify and specify a good research question?
- What is a dependent variable and why do we require variation?
- What are different types of research designs?

Mandatory

- G. Firebaugh (2008). *Seven Rules for Social Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: ch. 1.
- G. King, R. O. Keohane, and S. Verba (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: ch. 1; 107–12.

Optional

- R. Adcock and D. Collier (2001). “Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research”. *American Political Science Review* 95 (3): 529–546.
- P. M. Kellstedt and G. D. Whitten (2013). *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: ch. 4.

Week 5: Research Design: Falsifiability and Causal Inference (16.10.2019)

- Why do theories need to be falsifiable?
- What is causal inference and can we draw causal conclusions from observational data?

Mandatory Readings

- G. King, R. O. Keohane, and S. Verba (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: ch. 3.

Optional

- J. Gerring (2001). *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: ch. 7.
- P. W. Holland (1986). “Statistics and Causal Inference”. *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 81 (396): 945–960.

Week 6: Measuring Public Opinion (23.10.2019)

- What is public opinion?
- How can we measure public opinion?
- What are advantages and shortcomings of different survey instruments?

Mandatory Readings

- P. Squire (1988). “Why the 1936 Literary Digest Poll Failed”. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52 (1): 125–133.
- A. J. Berinsky (2017). “Measuring Public Opinion with Surveys”. *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 309–329.

Optional/Presentations

- D. Chong and J. N. Druckman (2007). “Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies”. *American Political Science Review* 101 (4): 637–655.
- P. M. Boynton and T. Greenhalgh (2004). “Selecting, Designing and Developing Your Questionnaire”. *BMJ* 328 (7451): 1312–1315.

Week 7: Economic Voting and the Cost of Governing (30.10.2019)

- What is democratic accountability?
- Why do government parties regularly lose public support at the next election?

Mandatory Readings

- C. H. Achen and L. M. Bartels (2016). *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: ch. 5.
- H. Klüver and J.-J. Spoon (2020). “Helping or Hurting? How Governing as a Junior Coalition Partner Influences Electoral Outcomes”. *The Journal of Politics* 82 (4): 231–1242.

Optional/Presentations

- M. W. Sances (2017). “Attribution Errors in Federalist Systems: When Voters Punish the President for Local Tax Increases”. *The Journal of Politics* 79 (4): 1286–1301.
- A. Fowler and A. B. Hall (2018). “Do Shark Attacks Influence Presidential Elections? Re-assessing a Prominent Finding on Voter Competence”. *The Journal of Politics* 80 (4): 1423–1437.

Week 8: CLASS CANCELLED (06.11.2019)

Week 9: Party Competition (13.11.2019)

- What goals do parties and politicians pursue?
- How do parties compete with each other, and how can we measure party competition?
- What are the differences between accountability and responsiveness?
- Do parties and politicians react to public opinion?

Mandatory Readings

- Z. Somer-Topcu (2015). “Everything to Everyone: The Electoral Consequences of the Broad-Appeal Strategy in Europe”. *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (4): 841–854.
- H. Klüver and J.-J. Spoon (2016). “Who Responds? Voters, Parties and Issue Attention”. *British Journal of Political Science* 46 (3): 633–654.

Optional/Presentations

- G. B. Powell (2004). “The Chain of Responsiveness”. *Journal of Democracy* 15 (4): 91–105.
- B. I. Page and R. Y. Shapiro (1983). “Effects of Public Opinion on Policy”. *American Political Science Review* 77 (1): 175–190.
- J. A. Stimson, M. B. Mackuen, and R. S. Erikson (1995). “Dynamic Representation”. *American Political Science Review* 89 (3): 543–565.
- D. E. Stokes (1963). “Spatial Models of Party Competition”. *American Political Science Review* 57 (2): 368–377.
- C. Green-Pedersen (2007). “The Growing Importance of Issue Competition: The Changing Nature of Party Competition in Western Europe”. *Political Studies* 55 (3): 607–628.
- M. Tavits (2007). “Principles vs. Pragmatism: Policy Shifts and Political Competition”. *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (1): 151–165.

- T. Böhmelt, L. Ezrow, R. Lehrer, and H. Ward (2016). “Party Policy Diffusion”. *American Political Science Review* 110 (2): 397–410.

Week 10: Party Positions, Salience and Issue Ownership (20.11.2019)

- What are differences between positions, salience, and issue ownership?
- How can we measure latent policy positions?
- What are methodological difficulties when measuring party positions?

Mandatory Readings

- M. Laver (2014). “Measuring Policy Positions in Political Space”. *Annual Review of Political Science* 17: 207–223.
- I. Budge (2015). “Issue Emphases, Saliency Theory and Issue Ownership: A Historical and Conceptual Analysis”. *West European Politics* 38 (4): 761–777.

Optional/Presentations

- J. Leinaweaver and R. Thomson (2016). “Greener Governments: Partisan Ideologies, Executive Institutions, and Environmental Policies”. *Environmental Politics* 25 (4): 633–660.
- S. Mikheylov, M. Laver, and K. Benoit (2012). “Coder Reliability and Misclassification in the Human Coding of Party Manifestos”. *Political Analysis* 20 (1): 78–91.
- Z. Somer-Topcu (2015). “Everything to Everyone: The Electoral Consequences of the Broad-Appeal Strategy in Europe”. *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (4): 841–854.
- D. Bischof and M. Wagner (2019). “Do Voters Polarize when Radical Parties Enter Parliament?”. *American Journal of Political Science* 63 (4): 888–904.

Week 11: Methods: Data Wrangling and Visualisation (27.11.2019)

- Recap: Using R to answer substantive research questions
- Introducing useful datasets
- Broad overview of methods and software for quantitative text analysis

Mandatory Readings

- H. Wickham and G. Grolemund (2017). *R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data*. Sebastopol: O’Reilly: skim ch. 1–6.

Optional

- K. Imai (2017). *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- K. Healy (2019). *Data Visualization: A Practical Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Week 12: Methods: Quantitative Text Analysis [I] (04.12.2019)

- What is quantitative text analysis?
- What is a text corpus, tokenisation, and a document-feature matrix?

Mandatory Readings

- J. Grimmer and B. M. Stewart (2013). “Text as Data: The Promise and Pitfalls of Automatic Content Analysis Methods for Political Texts”. *Political Analysis* 21 (3): 267–297.
- K. Welbers, W. Van Atteveldt, and K. Benoit (2017). “Text Analysis in R”. *Communication Methods and Measures* 11 (4): 245–265.
- K. Benoit, K. Watanabe, H. Wang, P. Nulty, A. Obeng, S. Müller, and A. Matsuo (2018). “quanteda: An R Package for the Quantitative Analysis of Textual Data”. *The Journal of Open Source Software* 3 (30): 774.

See also: <https://muellerstefan.net/teaching/2019-autumn-qta.pdf>.

Week 13: Methods: Quantitative Text Analysis [II] (11.12.2019)

- How can we apply the methods discussed in the previous session to real-world data?

Mandatory Readings

- M. Laver, J. Garry, and K. Benoit (2003). “Extracting Policy Positions from Political Texts Using Words as Data”. *American Political Science Review* 97 (2): 311–331.
- K. Benoit, D. Conway, B. E. Lauderdale, M. Laver, and S. Mikhaylov (2016). “Crowd-Sourced Text Analysis: Reproducible and Agile Production of Political Data”. *American Political Science Review* 110 (2): 278–295.

Optional

- K. Watanabe and S. Müller (2021). *Quanteda Tutorials*. URL: <https://tutorials.quanteda.io>.

See also: <https://muellerstefan.net/teaching/2019-autumn-qta.pdf>.

Week 14: Representation in the Age of Digital Democracy (18.12.2019)

- How does the internet change democratic decision making and representation?
- Do politicians and parties react to online discussions?

Mandatory Readings

- G. King, B. Schneer, and A. White (2017). “How the News Media Activate Public Expression and Influence National Agendas”. *Science* 358 (6364): 776–780.
- A. Guess, J. Nagler, and J. A. Tucker (2019). “Less Than You Think: Prevalence and Predictors of Fake News Dissemination on Facebook”. *Science Advances* 5 (1): eaau4586.

Optional/Presentations

- H. Farrell (2012). “The Consequences of the Internet for Politics”. *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 35–52.
- P. Barberá, A. Casas, J. Nagler, P. J. Egan, R. Bonneau, J. T. Jost, and J. A. Tucker (2019). “Who Leads? Who Follows? Measuring Issue Attention and Agenda Setting by Legislators and the Mass Public Using Social Media Data”. *American Political Science Review* 113 (4): 883–901.
- W. R. Neuman, L. Guggenheim, S. M. Jang, and S. Y. Bae (2014). “The Dynamics of Public Attention: Agenda-Setting Theory Meets Big Data”. *Journal of Communication* 64 (2): 193–214.