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University of Zurich^{UZH}

Research Seminar: 615-502b Spring Term 2020

Political Representation and Policy Preferences

Last update: February 5, 2020

<table>
<tr><td>Term: Spring term 2020</td><td>Lecturer: Stefan Müller</td></tr>
<tr><td>Time: 28/02; 20/03; 08/05; 13:00–17:00</td><td>E-mail: mueller@ipz.uzh.ch</td></tr>
<tr><td>Room: AFL-F-172/173 (Affolternstr. 56)</td><td>Office: AFL-H-349 (Affolternstr. 56)</td></tr>
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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 the research paper.

Details

- MA Research Seminar

- Language: English

- Grading: Wiki posts: 15%; Poster: 15%; Research paper: 70%

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)

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.

- Students will prepare a **Progress Report** and short **Presentation** of their research projects. The presentation must not exceed seven (!) minutes, must not include more than three slides, and will be held on 28 February or 20 March 2020. The progress report should contain the following aspects:

    - Research question and relevance; the variation to be explained (dependent variable); the expected relationship or causal mechanism (independent variable) [1–2 pages]

    - Case selection, time span, number of observations/cases [0.5 pages]

    - Method used to tackle research question [0.5 pages]

    - Operationalisation and measurement of all variables [2 pages]

    - Initial results (if possible)

- Students will write Wiki posts for the research outlines by their group peers. Posts must be submitted no later than two days prior to the respective presentation. Each posts should be around 500 words and should briefly point to the contributions of the project, but also make critical improvement suggestions. The posts will be uploaded as Wiki posts on OLAT. Each student will write three wiki posts, which (combined) count towards 15% of the grade.

- Students also prepare a **Poster** for presentation on 8 May 2020. The poster must be submitted as a PDF file no later than one week before the presentation (i.e. 1 May 2020). The poster counts towards 15% of the grade.

- Students write a research paper. The submission deadline is 1 June 2020. The paper counts towards 70% of the grade. Students submit the research paper as a PDF file at OLAT. More details on the research paper will be provided in the first session of the seminar.

Session 1: General Suggestions & Presentation Group 1 (28.02.2020)

In this session, I will first provide general comments about the research designs, the methods, and theories that came up when reading your research outlines. Afterwards, participants from Group 1 will present their progress reports. I will provide written comments on your proposals and the presentation. The other members of Group 1 will also send feedback (via OLAT) in advance of the session (see details above).

Session 2: Research Design and Methods & Presentation Group 2 (20.03.2020)

In the second session of the term, we will first deal with your questions on research design and the qualitative or quantitative methods. Moreover, participants from Group 2 will present their progress reports. I will provide written comments on your proposals and the presentation. The other members of Group 2 will also send feedback (via OLAT) in advance of the session (see details above).

Session 3: Poster Presentations (08.05.2020)

In our third session, all seminar participants will prepare their posters that summarise the research design, methods, and empirical findings. Details on the posters will be provided in the second session of the seminar, and an updated version of this course outline.