



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

Promises Made, Promises Kept? **Party Competition, Election Pledges, and Policy Outcomes**

Last update: September 4, 2019

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. 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 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?
- 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 an open 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 6, 2020 (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

- 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?
- How have political parties evolved over time?
- What constitutes a party system?

Mandatory Readings

- Charles Boix (2007). “[The Emergence of Parties and Party Systems](#)”. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Ed. by Charles Boix and Susan C. Stokes. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 314–334.
- Arend Lijphart (2012). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. 2nd edition. New Haven: Yale University Press: ch. 5.

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.
- 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.

Week 4: Measuring Public Opinion (09.10.2019)

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

Mandatory Readings

- Peverill Squire (1988). “[Why the 1936 Literary Digest Poll Failed](#)”. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52 (1): 125–133.
- Adam J. Berinsky (2017). “[Measuring Public Opinion with Surveys](#)”. *Annual Review of Political Science*.

Optional/Presentations

- Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman (2007). “[Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies](#)”. *American Political Science Review* 101 (4): 637–655.

Week 5: Politicians: Trustees or Delegates? (16.10.2019)

- What roles do politicians take during campaigns and in office?
- What are differences between the trustee and delegate model of representation? What type of representation is preferable?

Mandatory Readings

- Wolfgang C. Müller, Torbjörn Bergman, and Kaare Strøm (2006). “Parliamentary Democracy: Promise and Problems”. *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies*. Ed. by Kaare Strøm, Wolfgang C. Müller, and Torbjörn Bergman. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 3–32.

Optional/Presentations

- Shaun Bowler (2017). “Trustees, Delegates, and Responsiveness in Comparative Perspective”. *Comparative Political Studies* 50 (6): 766–793.
- Wolfgang C. Müller (2000). “Political Parties in Parliamentary Democracies: Making Delegation and Accountability Work”. *European Journal of Political Research* 37 (3): 309–333.
- Eva H. Önnudóttir (2016). “Political Parties and Styles of Representation”. *Party Politics* 22 (6): 732–745.

Week 6: Economic Voting and the Cost of Governing (23.10.2019)

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

Mandatory Readings

- Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels (2016). *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: ch. 5.
- Andrew Healy and Neil Malhotra (2013). “Retrospective Voting Reconsidered”. *Annual Review of Political Science* 16: 285–306.

Optional/Presentations

- Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt (1980). “Nine Second-Order National Elections: A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results”. *European Journal of Political Research* 8 (1): 3–44.
- Heike Klüver and Jae-Jae Spoon (forthcoming). “Helping or Hurting? How Governing as a Junior Coalition Partner Influences Electoral Outcomes”. *The Journal of Politics*.

- Anthony Fowler and Andrew B. Hall (2018). “Do Shark Attacks Influence Presidential Elections? Reassessing a Prominent Finding on Voter Competence”. *The Journal of Politics* 80 (4): 1423–1437.
- Michael 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.

Week 7: Responsiveness (30.10.2019)

- What are the differences between accountability and responsiveness?
- Do parties and politicians react to public opinion?

Mandatory Readings

- Christopher Wlezien (1995). “The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending”. *American Journal of Political Science* 39 (4): 981–1000.
- G. Bingham Powell (2004). “The Chain of Responsiveness”. *Journal of Democracy* 15 (4): 91–105.

Optional/Presentations

- Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro (1983). “Effects of Public Opinion on Policy”. *American Political Science Review* 77 (1): 175–190.
- James A. Stimson, Michael B. Mackuen, and Robert S. Erikson (1995). “Dynamic Representation”. *American Political Science Review* 89 (3): 543–565.
- Heike Klüver and Jae-Jae Spoon (2016). “Who Responds? Voters, Parties and Issue Attention”. *British Journal of Political Science* 46 (3): 633–654.

Week 8: Party Competition (06.11.2019)

- What goals do parties and politicians pursue?
- How do parties compete with each other, and how can we measure party competition?

Mandatory Readings

- Donald E. Stokes (1963). “Spatial Models of Party Competition”. *American Political Science Review* 57 (2): 368–377.
- Kaare Strøm (1990). “A Behavioral Theory of Competitive Political Parties”. *American Journal of Political Science* 34 (2): 565–598.

Optional/Presentations

- Christoffer Green-Pedersen (2007). “The Growing Importance of Issue Competition: The Changing Nature of Party Competition in Western Europe”. *Political Studies* 55 (3): 607–628.
- Margit Tavits (2007). “Principles vs. Pragmatism: Policy Shifts and Political Competition”. *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (1): 151–165.
- Tobias Böhmelt, Lawrence Ezrow, Roni Lehrer, and Hugh Ward (2016). “Party Policy Diffusion”. *American Political Science Review* 110 (2): 397–410.

Week 9: Party Positions, Salience and Issue Ownership (13.11.2019)

- 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

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

Optional/Presentations

- Slava Mikhaylov, Michael Laver, and Kenneth Benoit (2012). “Coder Reliability and Misclassification in the Human Coding of Party Manifestos”. *Political Analysis* 20 (1): 78–91.
- Zeynep 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.
- Daniel Bischof and Markus Wagner (2019). “Do Voters Polarize when Radical Parties Enter Parliament?”. *American Journal of Political Science* published ahead of print (doi: 10.1111/ajps.12449).

Week 10: Representation in the Age of Digital Democracy (20.11.2019)

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

Mandatory Readings

- Henry Farrell (2012). “The Consequences of the Internet for Politics”. *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 35–52.
- Gary King, Patricka Lam, and Margaret E. Roberts (2017). “Computer-Assisted Keyword and Document Set Discovery from Unstructured Text”. *American Journal of Political Science* 61 (4): 971–988.

Optional/Presentations

- Pablo Barberá, Andreu Casas, Jonathan Nagler, Patrick J. Egan, Richard Bonneau, John T. Jost, and Joshua 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* published ahead of print (doi: 10.1017/S0003055419000352).
- Andrew Guess, Jonathan Nagler, and Joshua A. Tucker (2019). “Less Than You Think: Prevalence and predictors of fake news dissemination on Facebook”. *Science Advances* 5 (1): eaau4586.
- W. Russel Neuman, Lauren Guggenheim, S. Mo Jang, and Soo Young Bae (2014). “The Dynamics of Public Attention: Agenda-Setting Theory Meets Big Data”. *Journal of Communication* 64 (2): 193–214.

Week 11: Methods Crash Course (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

- Hadley Wickham and Garrett Grolemund (2017). *R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data*. Sebastopol: O’Reilly: skim ch. 1–6.
- Kenneth Benoit, Kohei Watanabe, Haiyan Wang, Paul Nulty, Adam Obeng, Stefan Müller, and Akitaka Matsuo (2018). “quanteda: An R Package for the Quantitative Analysis of Textual Data”. *The Journal of Open Source Software* 3 (30): 774.

Optional

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

Week 12: Research Design: Research Question and Dependent Variable (04.12.2019)

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

Optional

- Robert Adcock and David Collier (2001). “Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research”. *American Political Science Review* 95 (3): 529–546.

Week 13: Research Design: Falsifiability and Causal Inference (11.12.2019)

Mandatory Readings

- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: ch. 3.
- Paul W. Holland (1986). “Statistics and Causal Inference”. *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 81 (396): 945–960.

Optional

- John Gerring (2001). *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: ch. 7.

Week 14: Feedback on Research Proposal (18.12.2019)

In the last session of the term, we will discuss the research proposals and outline the contents of the Spezialisierung in Spring semester 2020.