

PARTY COMPETITION AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Fall Term 2022/23

Heinrich Heine Universität Düsseldorf

25./26. November and 2./3. December 2022; 10:00h – 17:00h

Instructor:	Rebecca Kittel, PhD Researcher, European University Institute
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Office Hours:	By appointment or after class.

Course Description

This course gives an overview of party competition and how political communication interacts with party competition. The course, first, provides an introduction on how parties work and the interplay of party systems, electoral systems and legislative arenas as one platform of competition. It discusses how electoral systems can affect party competition and how parties position themselves in parliament to win the most votes. Further, the course discusses how parties use certain rhetorical strategies to communicate with their voters. Looking at different communication arenas (e.g. parliaments or Twitter), we will discuss various communication strategies of parties. A focus is drawn to emerging quantitative text analysis techniques (text-as-data) providing a first insight into emerging Computational Social Sciences methods. Also, we discuss the effect of different framing strategies on voters.

Objectives:

Students will learn state of the art research on party competition with a strong focus on parties' political communication strategies. The course will focus on comparative politics approaches in party research but will also go beyond that. Thus, the course aims to provide an overview on (i) interaction of party and electoral systems; (ii) salience theory, issue ownership and party positions; (iii) rhetorical strategies of parties with examples of text-as-data approaches; and (iv) how framing strategies can affect voters.

Further, students will learn how to read scientific papers and discuss them in class. We will focus on pitfalls, but also strengths of the required readings, so that students are prepared to write their own term paper at the end of the course. Also, students will get an insight into emerging text-as-data techniques in Political Science research. Using party and communication research as an example, we will look at current state of the art research in the emerging field of Computational Social Sciences. The course is designed as a introductory comparative politics course with a strong substantive focus on party politics and political communication.

Pre-Requirements:

Students should have taken the introductory Political Science courses in the first year of their undergraduate studies. Further, they should be able and willing to read English literature and participate in English during the course. No other formal requirements are needed.

Course Requirements:

Students are required to have done the assigned readings before each class. Further on students are required to participate in the course and take part in the discussions. The course is designed

in an interactive way. Thus, all listed readings that do not explicitly state to be an additional reading are mandatory. Students can decide if they want to take the course for credits for a term paper (Modulabschlussprüfung – AP) or for credits for participation (Beteiligungsnachweis – BN).

Requirements for the Modulabschlussprüfung: A term paper of 4500-5000 words and a short oral presentation (about 5 minutes) of the topic of the term paper at the last day of the course (see *Small Research Colloquium*).

→ **Deadline for the Term Paper is 10. March 2023 (midnight).**

Requirements for the Beteiligungsnachweis: Four brief response papers of any of the mandatory readings. Response papers should not exceed 500 words. You should try to pose questions and/or criticism that you may have on the readings. You can also connect it to broader Political Science or Societal questions.

→ **Response Papers should be handed in by 24. November 2022 for papers discussed on Day 1 and Day 2 and 1. December 2022 for papers discussed on Day 3 and Day 4.**

Course Outline:

Day 1 (Friday, 25. Nov. 2022): Parties and Voters

10:00 – 13:00: Parties and Party Systems

Session 1:

- Welcome and general introduction, organisational questions
- How would you define a political party? → Group Work
- **Literature:**

White, John K. (2006). What is a Political Party?. In *Handbook of Party Politics*, Richard S. Katz William Crotty (Eds.). London: Sage Publications, pp. 5-15.

Session 2:

- **Literature:**

Lijphart, Arend. 2012. Party System: Two-Party and Multiparty Patterns. In *Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performances in Thirty-Six Countries (2nd Edition)*., Arend Lijphart (Ed.) New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 60-78. (Chapter 5)

13:00 – 14:00: Lunch Break

14:00 – 17:00: Interaction of Party and Electoral Systems

Session 3:

- **Literature:**

– Ezrow, Lawrence. 2010. Citizen-Party Linkages, Political Institutions and Type of Party. In *Linking Citizens and Parties: How Electoral Systems Matter for Political Representation*

- Lawrence Ezrow. 2008. Parties' Policy Programmes and the Dog that Didn't Bark: No Evidence that Proportional Systems Promote Extreme Party Positioning. *British Journal of Political Science* 38(3):479-497. (additional reading)

Session 4:

- **Literature:**

Lijphart, Arend. 2012. Electoral Systems: Majority and Plurality Methods Versus Proportional Representation. In *Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performances in Thirty-Six Countries (2nd Edition)*. Arend Lijphart (Ed.) New Haven:Yale University Press, pp. 130-157. (Chapter 8)

Day 2 (Saturday, 26. Nov. 2022): Party Competition in Electoral Arenas

10:00 – 13:00: Salience Theory, Issue Ownership and New Media

Session 5:

- **Literature:**

- Green, Jane and Sara B. Hobolt. 2008. Owning the issue agenda: Party strategies and vote choices in British elections. *Electoral Studies* 27(3):460-476.
- Budge, Ian. 2015. Issue emphases, saliency theory and issue ownership: a historical and conceptual analysis. *West European Politics* 38(4):761-777. (additional reading)

Session 6:

- **Literature:**

Kefford, Glenn, Katharine Dommett, Jessica Baldwin-Philippi, Sara Bannerman, Tom Dobber, Simon Kruschinski, Sanne Kruikemeier, and Erica Rzepecki. 2022. 'Data-Driven Campaigning and Democratic Disruption: Evidence from Six Advanced Democracies'. *Party Politics*. Vol. 0(0) 1–15. (April 2022).

13:00 – 14:00: Lunch Break

14:00 – 16:15: Party Positions in Coalition Governments

Session 7:

- **Literature:**

Martin, Lanny W. and Georg Vanberg. 2014. Parties and Policymaking in Multiparty Governments: The Legislative Median, Ministerial Autonomy, and the Coalition Compromise. *American Journal of Political Science* 58(4):979-996.

Session 8:

- How to write a term paper for the course
- Group Work → What research are you interested? Possible research questions for a term paper
- **Literature:**

Minkoff, Scott L. 2018. A Guide to Developing and Writing Research Papers in Political Science. Website: www.scottminkoff.com/guides/, last accessed July 2022.

Day 3 (Friday, 2. Dec. 2022): Political Communication**10:00 – 13:00: Rhetorical Strategies of Political Parties from Parliament to Social Media**

Session 9:

• Literature:

- Valentim, Vincente and Tobias Widmann. 2021. Does Radical-Right Success Make the Political Debate More Negative? Evidence from Emotional Rhetoric in German State Parliaments. *Political Behavior*.
- Sarah Engler, Theresa Gessler, Tarik Abou-Chadi and Lucas Leemann. 2022. Democracy challenged: how parties politicize different democratic principles. *Journal of European Public Policy*. (additional reading)

Session 10:

• Literature:

- Castanho Silva, Bruno and Proksch, Sven-Oliver. 2021. Politicians unleashed? Political communication on Twitter and in parliament in Western Europe. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 1-17.
- Stukal, Denis, Sergey Sanovich, Richard Bonneau and Joshua A. Tucker. 2022. Why Botter: How Pro-Government Bots Fight Opposition in Russia. *American Political Science Review*, 116(3), 843-857. (additional reading)

13:00 – 14:00: Lunch Break**14:00 – 17:00: Text-As-Data Approaches in Political Communication**

Session 11:

• Literature:

- Rooduijn, Matthijs and Teun Pauwels. 2011. Measuring Populism: Comparing Two Methods of Content Analysis. *West European Politics* 34(6):1272-1283.
- Grimmer, Justin and Brandon M. Stewart. 2013. Text as Data: The Promise and Pitfalls of Automatic Content Analysis Methods for Political Texts. *Political Analysis*, 21(3), 267-297. (additional reading)

Session 12:

• Students should bring their laptops to this session!

- Please follow the link below on how to install the open source software R and RStudio on your laptop <https://rstudio-education.github.io/hopr/starting.html>. Students are expected to have **R and RStudio installed and running** on their computers
- Hands-on lab session in R → short introduction to R and its usage for text-as-data approaches

- Creating a dictionary to measure policy positions/political concepts and application in R
→ Group Work

Day 4 (Saturday, 3. Dec. 2022): Effects on Voters: Framing Theory

10:00 – 13:00: Rhetorical Strategies at Work

Session 13:

- **Literature:**

Chong, Dennis and James N. Druckman. 2007. Framing Theory. *Annual Review of Political Science* 10: 103-26.

Session 14:

- **Literature:**

- Stubager, R., and Seeberg, H. B. 2016. What can a party say? How parties' communication can influence voters' issue ownership perceptions. *Electoral Studies* 44(December): 162–171.
- Busby, Ethan C., Joshua R. Gubler and Kirk A. Hawkins. 2019. Framing and Blame Attribution in Populist Rhetoric. *The Journal of Politics* 81(2):616-630. (additional reading)

13:00 – 14:00: Lunch Break

14:00 – 16:15: Small Research Colloquium

Session 15:

- Short Presentation about research topic for term paper
 - Presentation should be about 5 minutes and focus on the research question, hypotheses and possible data sources to answer the research question
 - Everyone in the course is expected to give a short statement/idea towards the presentation (irrespective of writing a term paper or not)
- Conclusion, pending questions and evaluation of the course