

# PARTY COMPETITION AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Spring Term 2023

University of Lucerne

17./18. March and 31. March/1.April 2023; 9:00h – 16:00h/14:30h

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<b>Office Hours:</b>	By appointment or after class.

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## 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. 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.

## Course Requirements:

In general, 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 either receive 4 ECTS or 6 ECTS. Below you find the individual requirements.

#### 4 ECTS Requirements

1. students should attend all sessions
2. hand in three brief response papers before the respective block.
  - A response papers can be 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. Your response papers should not be on your presentation topic.  
→ **Response Papers should be handed in by 16. March 2023 at noon for papers discussed on Day 1 and Day 2 and 30. April 2023 at noon for papers discussed on Day 3 and Day 4.**
3. give a 10-minutes presentation
  - Presentations will be assigned before the course. They will be held in teams of 2 to 3 students. You will receive an email before the course with your group members, the topic of your presentation and further instructions. The presentations will be based on one of the mandatory readings.

#### 6 ECTS Requirements:

- To receive 6 ECTS, students can submit a Term Paper. They will be graded individually. We will have a designated session on how to write a Term Paper and discuss possible topics for it.

## Course Outline:

### Day 1 (Friday, 17. March 2023): Parties and Voters

#### 9:00 – 12:00: 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)

**12:00 – 13:00: Lunch Break****13:00 – 16:00: 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)

**• How to write a scientific paper?**

- 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/](http://www.scottminkoff.com/guides/) , last accessed July 2022.

**Day 2 (Saturday, 18. March 2023): Party Competition in Electoral Arenas****9:00 – 12:00: 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).

**12:00 – 13:00: Lunch Break****13:00 – 14:30: 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.

**Day 3 (Friday, 31. March 2023): Political Communication****9:00 – 12:00: Rhetorical Strategies of Political Parties from Parliament to Social Media**

Session 8:

**• 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 9:

**• 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)

**12:00 – 13:00: Lunch Break****13:00 – 16:00: Text-As-Data Approaches in Political Communication**

Session 10:

**• 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 11:

- **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, 1. April 2023): Effects on Voters: Framing Theory

##### **9:00 – 12:00: Rhetorical Strategies at Work**

Session 12:

- **Literature:**

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

Session 13:

- **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.

##### **12:00 – 13:00: Lunch Break**

##### **13:00 – 14:30: Language Effects and the Future of Political Communication Research**

Session 14:

- **Literature:**

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.

- Wrap-up of the course
- Outlook to future research → Group work: What research would you be interested in conducting? What do you think is still missing?