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Hauptseminar Vergleichende Regierungslehre: What Moves Parties?

Spring Term 2021

Time and place: Wednesdays, 13.45pm-3.15pm, Location: Zoom

First session: 3rd March 2021

Office hours: By appointment

This seminar's focus is to prepare you for writing a Bachelor dissertation in Comparative Politics. We will learn how to develop a theoretical argument, how to derive a hypothesis from it, and how to write a research paper. With respect to content, we will focus on spatial party competition, i.e., why parties change their policy positions.

The seminar will combine rational choice theory, bounded rationality, game theory and (spatial) statistics.

Prior to the seminars, participants need to be familiar with the basics of OLS regressions.

You need to register for this class in advance via the Studierendenportal at <https://portal2.uni-mannheim.de>.

All **course materials** can be accessed at <https://portal2.uni-mannheim.de>.

I will send out emails to your university e-mail accounts, so please check them regularly.

Requirements to pass:

1. Constant and active participation in class:

- It is mandatory to attend classes (online), and to participate in them actively. The rules of the University of Mannheim, and its Faculty of Social Sciences apply.
- You need to use your name as your Zoom name, and you need to have your video activated at all times.
- You have to read the assigned literature before coming to class.

2. Presentation:

- Every participant will (jointly with somebody else) give a presentation on an assigned paper.
- Your task is to present the paper critically, and to link it to the context that we have discussed so far. This includes describing and explaining
 - the paper's goal(s),
 - its context,
 - the means it uses to accomplish its goal(s), and
 - the results it presents.
- Your task also includes deriving a sketch for a final paper you could write based on the paper you present including
 - a research question and its context in the literature (i.e., what is new about your research and why does it matter),
 - a theoretical argument,
 - an empirical approach to test your theoretical implications.
- Presentations should take 25 mins.

3. Final paper: (determines your final grade)

- Maximally 4000 words main text (i.e., excluding cover page, graphs, tables and references but including footnotes and endnotes).
- Marking will follow the rules we set out in the session on thesis writing.
- Submit by email no later than 31st July 2021 at midnight including cover sheet, references, and the Erklärung für Hausarbeiten. Late submission will be penalized.

Course Content and Reading List

* denotes mandatory readings for class

Session 1 — 3rd March — Administrative issues, Theory basics

Session 2 — 10th March — The Downsian Spatial Model

*Downs, A. (1957). An economic theory of democracy. Chapter 8.

Plümper, T., & Martin, C. W. (2008). Multi-party competition: A computational model with abstention and memory. *Electoral Studies*, 27(3), 424-441.

Session 3 — 17th March — Alternatives to Downsian Competition

*Budge, I. (1994). A new spatial theory of party competition: Uncertainty, ideology and policy equilibria viewed comparatively and temporally. *British journal of political science*, 443-467.

Wittman, D. A. (1973). Parties as utility maximizers. *The American Political Science Review*, 67(2), 490-498.

Session 4 — 24th March — Public Opinion

*Adams, J., Clark, M., Ezrow, L., & Glasgow, G. (2004). Understanding change and stability in party ideologies: do parties respond to public opinion or to past election results?. *British journal of political science*, 589-610.

Ezrow, L., De Vries, C., Steenbergen, M., & Edwards, E. (2011). Mean voter representation and partisan constituency representation: Do parties respond to the mean voter position or to their supporters?. *Party Politics*, 17(3), 275-301.

Session 5 — 14th April — Rival Party Shifts

*Adams, J., & Somer-Topcu, Z. (2009). Policy adjustment by parties in response to rival parties' policy shifts: Spatial theory and the dynamics of party competition in twenty-five post-war democracies. *British Journal of Political Science*, 825-846.

Williams, L. K. (2015). It's all relative: Spatial positioning of parties and ideological shifts. *European Journal of Political Research*, 54(1), 141-159.

Session 6 — 21st April — Writing 1: How to Write a Theory

*Stimson, J. A. (2010). *Professional Writing in Political Science: A Highly opinionated Essay*.

Session 7 — 28th April — Office Attainment

*Schumacher, G., De Vries, C. E., & Vis, B. (2013). Why do parties change position? Party organization and environmental incentives. *The Journal of Politics*, 75(2), 464-477.

Schumacher, G., Van de Wardt, M., Vis, B., & Klitgaard, M. B. (2015). How aspiration to office conditions the impact of government participation on party platform change. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(4), 1040-1054.

Session 8 — 5th May — Writing 2: How to Write the Empirics

Session 9 — 12th May — Party Policy Diffusion

*Böhmelt, T., Ezrow, L., Lehrer, R., & Ward, H. (2016). Party policy diffusion. *American Political Science Review*, 110(2), 397-410.

Böhmelt, T., Ezrow, L., Lehrer, R., Schleiter, P., & Ward, H. (2017). Why dominant governing parties are cross-nationally influential. *International Studies Quarterly*, 61(4), 749-759.

Session 10 — 19th May — Other perspectives

*Merrill III, S., & Adams, J. (2002). Centrifugal incentives in multi-candidate elections. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 14(3), 275-300.

De Sio, L., & Weber, T. (2014). Issue yield: A model of party strategy in multidimensional space. *American Political Science Review*, 870-885.

Session 11 — 26th May — Writing 2: How to Write Intro and Conclusion

Session 12 — 2nd June — Policy Ambiguity

*Sommer-Topcu, Z. (2015). Everything to everyone: The electoral consequences of the broad-appeal strategy in Europe. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(4), 841-854.

Rovny, J. (2012). Who emphasizes and who blurs? Party strategies in multidimensional competition. *European Union Politics*, 13(2), 269-292.

Session 13 — 9th June — Voter Shifts

*Abou-Chadi, T., & Stoetzer, L. F. (2020). How Parties React to Voter Transitions. *American Political Science Review*, 1-6.

Adams, J., & Ezrow, L. (2009). Who do European parties represent? How Western European parties represent the policy preferences of opinion leaders. *The Journal of Politics*, 71(1), 206-223.

Session 14 — 16th June — Review and Final Paper