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BA Seminar 2015-2016

PARTIES, VOTERS, AND ELECTIONS

300.540 (2SSt SE, WS 2015/2016) 8 ECTS

MONDAYS 11h00-13h00 HS388 (RU42OG1.114)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the interplay between voters, political parties and elections in advanced industrial democracies. During the semester, we will cover topics ranging from the underpinning of mass opinions and attitudes, how parties are organized and nominate candidates, the overall role of political parties in the democratic political process, to the main explanations of vote choice. Students should leave this course with a critical understanding of the mechanics underpinning elections at the individual level and of the main theories of voting behavior.

The course is a seminar, which means that class time will be devoted exclusively to the discussion of the assigned readings, rather than to lecturing. -- Student participation is an important part of this class. Participants should read the assigned material for the week *before* class. Each week participants discuss a subset of the pertinent scholarly literature independently, usually focusing on a major theoretical controversy using examples from democracies around the world.

Class will meet every Monday from 11h00 to 13h00 in HS388 (RU42OG1.114) starting 05.10.2015 until 25.01.2015. The seminar and its evaluation will be conducted in English. I will make the additional materials you will need for this course available on the portal *Blackboard*, within the limits of legality, of course.

Sprechstunde: TBA

COURSE SCHEDULE

1. October 5: Introduction and Roadmap to the course

Voters:

2. October 12: Looking at mass beliefs
3. October 19: Issues and ideological orientation
4. November 9: Are values changing?

Parties:

5. November 16: Political parties: organization and rise
6. November 23: Candidate selection
7. November 30: Party systems and change

Elections

8. December 14: Electoral Campaigns
9. December 21*: How partisanship informs voting (this date will change)
10. January 11: Attitudes, issues, context and vote choice
11. January 18: The economy and voting
12. January 25: Women and elections

GOALS OF THIS CLASS

1. To improve students' understanding of mass opinions and attitudes
2. To familiarize students with contemporary issues about the practice of democracy in advanced industrial democracies: the functions and roles of political parties including processes of party nominations, to look at party systems and their recent developments.
3. To explore the main determinants of voting behavior and turnout
4. To learn and sharpen analytical skills, such as conceptual thinking and the use of research for drawing conclusions.

REQUIREMENTS:

The following is required of all students enrolled in this course:

- To attend all class meetings;
- To do all required readings;
- To participate actively in the class discussions;
- To prepare a series of short handouts and questions;
- To select by October 20 one of 2 tracks;

Grade breakdown:

- a) Participation: 30%
- b) Short reaction papers : 10%
- c) Questions: 10%
- d) Track option total: 50%

a) Participation 30%

You will be called upon to be active participants in this class. Participation is not some residual category, in which you automatically do well. Make no mistake, this participation is very real and could have an impact on your overall active learning grade, as it is a meaningful and critical component of the course. Those who do well in the active learning component will:

- Initiate discussion with questions and ideas that flow from the readings and prior discussion;
- Build creatively and productively on the comments of others in class;
- Demonstrate a well-informed stance towards the class material (by, for instance, being able to point to specific, relevant passages in the readings, or raise ideas for discussion that are overlooked by others, including your instructor);
- Muster enthusiasm for difficult intellectual content, and
- Work with others in the course in an enthusiastic, productive, contentious manner when

b) Short reaction papers 10%

BA students with 8 ECTS: 2 reaction papers

Master students with 6 ECTS: every class

Master students with 8 ECTS: every class

These should be concise reviews of the current week's required readings. Keep them to one/two page, single-spaced maximum. Your short reviews do not need to be in a continuous text form, they can be a series of points. These are due in class, beginning on October 12 . Because they are meant to encourage you to think about the readings before you come to class, no late reviews will be accepted.

If you chose track 1, you do not have to submit a "weekly short review" if you submit a discussion paper in a given week.

In your reviews, you should:

1. Summarize the main arguments of the readings for the week. What are the readings about? How do they relate to each other? (Keep this part short – half of the page, maximum)
2. Critique the readings – consider methodology, logic, biases, omissions, etc. Do the authors prove what they propose convincingly? Why or why not?
3. Identify at least 3 questions that you would like to discuss in class.

c) Questions 10%

Each class you should have 1 question you would like to discuss with the class, on

- something you would like to discuss or debate with your peers,
- aspects of the session that puzzle or interest you.
- critique of the texts

Each class we will discuss these: a) questions will be written on the board and pairs of students will work on one, or b) individuals, in turn, ask their question and chair the discussion until they feel they have received a satisfactory answer.

d) Track option 50%

TRACK 1: Series of discussion papers (50%)

BA students with 8 ECTS: 5 Discussion Papers

Master students with 6 ECTS: 5 Discussion Papers + 1 Discussion co-leadership

Master students with 8 ECTS: 6 Discussion Papers + 1 Discussion co-leadership

Discussion Leadership

You will serve as the class discussion leader or co-leader once during the semester. After I give a short, general overview of the week's topic, we will discuss the readings individually. You will briefly (in 2-3 minutes) introduce each reading by reminding the class of the author's main argument and the method(s) he/she uses to support that argument. Then you will help lead the discussion by raising questions about the readings. Think of this as an extension of your one-page review – deal with the same issues, but in more detail.

Discussion papers

Discussion papers are about 5-6 pages each (7-8 pages for MA students), and focus on the 2 required readings of the week (MA students pick 3, your pick among required or recommended). The papers should be literature reviews of the readings with a twist. That is, they present a sketch of the major theories (explanations) and the results of your own assessment, focused around a question of your choice (think about something to really unite the readings to a common theme, some time that could be asked at an exam, for example). Some of the best examples of this type of literature review of several books appear in *World Politics* and *The Annual Review of Political Science*. You may want to look at some of review essays in journals before you write your own. You should address the 3 following points.

- 1) What are the authors trying to demonstrate? Summarize the arguments using the following criteria:

- a. What are the main hypotheses defended by the authors? Are there sub-hypotheses?
- b. What are the main variables? What is the theoretical argument that links the variables?
- c. What level of analysis is used? (Micro or macro) Who performs the action: people, institutions, states?
- d. What is the type of analysis used (Deductive/inductive)
- e. What kind of method is the author employing? (Case studies, comparison of many cases, qualitative, quantitative, a mix of methods)

2) Evaluate the theory: are these pieces of literature convincing? Below are some examples of evaluation criteria to help you make your point. You do not need to deal with all these items at once, just those you feel are relevant to your argument.

- a. Originality: new findings? New theory?
- b. Simplicity/parsimony (uses many or few variables to make a point?)
- c. Coherent/internally consistent (no propositions that contradict each other)
- d. pertinent/useful (you can apply this to real world cases)
- e. Predictive (you can make predictions using this theory, and if the predictions coming from it are validated by facts)
- f. Is this generalizable to many cases/countries, or just applicable to a single/few cases?
- g. Does it seem normative or objective? (Do the authors speak about how things are in the real world, or how things should be?)
- h. Are the variables adequately conceptualized and operationalized? Are the concepts clear? Were the measures chosen to evaluate concepts adequate?
- i. Was the choice of design acceptable, or could you recommend a better way to test the theory?

3) What links the articles together? Which of the theories proposed is most adequate and why, at least with respect to the question you have posed. Keep in mind that mature scholarship asks not so much whether someone is right or wrong but under what kinds of circumstances a theory is useful... What do we know about a particular topic, what do we still need to find out?

Papers are due no later than class time. I cannot accept late papers because that would put those who complied with the deadline at a disadvantage (e.g. after the class discussion on the topic). If you think you will fail to meet the deadline, then you should plan to submit a later paper. You have the control over which papers you choose to write, and that flexibility should be sufficient to make sure you plan your schedule so that all your deadlines do not coincide. You should write at least one paper before October 27th

TRACK 2: Research paper (50%) (Deadline February 26 2016)

BA students with 8 ECTS: 18-20 pages + written proposal

Master students with 8 ECTS: 22-25 pages + written proposal

Master students with 6 ECTS: 20-22 pages + written proposal

Write an original research paper on a reasonably well-designed research proposal (which I should approve ahead of time. topic should be directly related to this course. The structure of the research paper should be modeled on an academic article from a peer-reviewed journal, with the requirements specified by your level e.g. BA or MA. It is important that you ask and try to answer a clearly stated question. Students should seek to investigate research questions using data as much as possible.

You should submit a written proposal of what you intend to work on by November 24th.

READINGS

The reading load for this course will seem heavy at first sight. I have selected sections from a various amount of articles and books to cover topics in order to permit interesting comparisons and some disagreement on certain issues. The secret to cope with a bulk of reading is to skim strategically: Knowing how to *skim* readings is an important professional skill for students (you cannot realistically be expected to read ALL the materials for each class you are taking, right?). In most cases, you can skim the empirical details, especially if they are buried in complex formulas. For this, you need to read purposefully, and look out for the important “stuff” in a text:

- The central question or puzzle the author seeks to answer or resolve;
- The definition of the dependent variable, or what the author wants to explain;
- The main independent variables the author(s) thinks are at work;
- The theory, or the rationale, that links independent to dependent variables; why should certain things be related?
- The author’s research design: the types of evidence used to test hypotheses, where the evidence comes from, and if you are convinced by it all.

LATE PAPER POLICY

I understand that printers break, dogs/uncles/grandmas sometimes die, and hard drives often fail around final paper due dates. I will accept track 2 papers late, but each late day will cost you 5% of your grade. (Weekly review papers and discussion papers cannot be handed in late for the above cited reasons).

PLAGIARISM

A note on plagiarism. Full citations must be included for every source you utilize, including those you paraphrase even loosely. Citations must be included if you paraphrase another author, or if you use another’s ideas, even if not the exact words. You should select a standard citation style and stick to it. Lifting papers from the internet will be punished by a failing grade and reported to the appropriate authorities.

KEY LITERATURE

- Dalton, Russell J. 2014. *Citizen politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. 6th Edition. Thousand Oaks: CQ Press/Sage.
- Niemi, Richard. G. Herbert F. Weisberg (eds).1993. *Classics in Voting Behavior*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press
- Niemi, Richard. G. Herbert F. Weisberg, and David C. Kimball (eds.). 2011. *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press.
- LeDuc, Lawrence, Richard Niemi, and Pippa Norris (eds.). 2010. *Comparing Democracies 3. Elections and Voting in the 21st Century*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- LeDuc, Lawrence, Richard Niemi, and Pippa Norris (eds.). 2002. *Comparing Democracies 2: New Challenges in the Study of Elections and Voting*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

COURSE READINGS AND CONTENT:

WEEK 1 (5 October): Introduction and Roadmap to the course

Voters:

WEEK 2 (October 12): Looking at Mass Beliefs

Required Reading

- Dalton, Russell J. 2014. *Citizen politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Ch. 2, pp.15-35.
- Delli Carpini, M. X. (1999). "In Search of the Information Citizen: What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters." *The Communication Review*, 4 129-164.

Readings to go further

- Converse, Philip E. 2006. The nature of belief systems in mass publics (1964), *Critical Review*, 18:1-3, 1-74, DOI: 10.1080/08913810608443650.
- Feldman, Stanley. "Political Ideology" in Huddy, L. et al. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. Oxford University Press, Ch. 19, pp.591-626.
- Niemi, Richard. G. Herbert F. Weisberg, and David C. Kimball (eds.). 2011. Controversies in Voting Behavior. *Classics in Voting Behavior*, ch.3 & 5, pp.41-64, 75-89.
- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinions*. NY: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2.

WEEK 3 (October 19): Issues and ideological orientation

Required Reading

- Dalton, Russell J. 2014. *Citizen politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, ch.6, pp. 105-129.
- Abramowitz, Alan A. and Kyle L. Saunders. 2008. "Is Polarization a Myth?" *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 70(2):542-555.

Readings to go further

- Flanigan, W. and Nancy H. Zingale. 2006. *The Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, CQ Press, ch.6, pp.127-158.
- Carmines, Edward G. Enseley, Miachel J., and Michael W. Wagner. 2012. "Who Fits the Left-Right Divide? Partisan Polarization in the American Electorate," *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 56(12): 1631-1653.
- Niemi, Richard. G. Herbert F. Weisberg (eds).1993. *Classics in Voting Behavior*, chapters 4,5,6, pp.43-65.

"Fun" Homework:

- Watch CNBC Republican Debate on 28 October. We will discuss candidate selection on 23 November. (<http://www.uspresidentialelectionnews.com>)

WEEK 4 (November 11): Are values changing?

Required Reading

- Dalton, Russell J. 2014. *Citizen politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, ch.5, pp.87-103
- Dalton, Russell J. 2015. "Citizenship and the Transformation of American Society". In Russell Dalton, *The Good Citizen: How Young People are Transforming American Politics*, 2nd ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2015, chapter 1.

Readings to go further

- Inglehart, Ronald. 1990. *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP. Introduction, chapters 1-4 + 13.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy*, Vol 6(1):65-78.

Parties:

WEEK 5 (November 16): Political parties: organization and rise

Required Reading

- Strom, Kaare. 1990. "A Behavioral Theory of Competitive Political Parties" *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 34(2): 565-598.
- Müller, Wolfgang C. 2003. "Political parties in parliamentary democracies: Making delegation and accountability work." *European Journal of Political Research*. 37(3):309-333.

Readings to go further

- Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties?: The Origins and Transformation of Party Politics in America* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 3-61.
- Katz, Richard and Peter Mair, "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party." *Party Politics* 1, 1(January 1995), 5-28.
- Müller, Wolfgang C. and Kaare Strom, eds., *Policy, Office, or Votes: How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, Ch. 1.
- LaPalombara, J. and M. Weiner. "The Origins of Political Parties" in , In Peter Mair (ed), *The West European Party System*. Oxford: Oxford UP: pp. 25-30.

"Fun" Homework:

- Watch the CNBC Democratic Debate on 14 November. We will discuss candidate selection on 23 November. (<http://www.uspresidentialelectionnews.com>)

WEEK 6 (November 23): Candidate selection

*discussion of US presidential nomination debates

Required Reading

- Hazan, Reuven. "Candidate Selection" in in LeDuc, Lawrence, Richard Niemi, and Pippa Norris (eds.). 2002. *New Challenges in the Study of Elections and Voting*, chapter 5, pp. 108-126.
- Polsby, N. et al. 2011. *Presidential Elections/ Strategies and Structures of American Politics*, 13th Edition, Rowman & Littlefield. Ch. 4, pp. 97-147.

Readings to go further

- Norrander, Barbara. 2011. "Primary Elections" in Leighley, J. (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior*, Oxford University Press, Ch. 27, pp.514-530.
- Cross, William P and Richard S. Katz. (eds.) 2013. *The Challenges of Intra Party Democracy*, Oxford University Press.
- Rahat, Gideon, and Reuven Y. Hazan. 2001. "Candidate Selection Methods. An Analytical Framework" *Party Politics*, vol 7(3): 297-322.

WEEK 7 (November 30): Party systems and change

Required Reading

- Mair, Peter. "Comparing Party Systems" in LeDuc, Lawrence, Richard Niemi, and Pippa Norris (eds.). 2002. *New Challenges in the Study of Elections and Voting*, pp. 88-107.
- Dalton, Russell J. 2008. "The Quantity and the Quality of Party Systems" *Party System Polarization, its measurement, and its consequences.* *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(7): 899-920.

Readings to go further

- Sartori, Giovanni. 1990. "A Typology of Party Systems," In Peter Mair (ed), *The West European Party System*. Oxford: Oxford UP: 316-349.
- Dalton, Russell J. 2014. *Citizen politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, ch.7, pp. 133-153.

Elections

WEEK 8 (December 14) Electoral Campaigns

Required Reading

- Wlezien, Chris. "Election Campaigns" in LeDuc, L., Richard Niemi, and Pippa Norris (eds.). 2010. *Comparing Democracies 3. Elections and Voting in the 21st Century*, Ch. 5, pp.98-117.
- De Vreese, Claes H. "Campaign Communication and Media" in LeDuc, L., Richard Niemi, and Pippa Norris (eds.). 2010. *Comparing Democracies 3. Elections and Voting in the 21st Century*, Ch. 6, pp.118-140.

Readings to go further

- Flanigan, W. and Nancy H. Zingale. 2006. *The Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, CQ Press, Ch. 7, pp.161-193.
- D. Ohr "Changing patterns in political communication" Ch. 2 in K. Aarts, A. Blais & H. Schmitt (eds.) *Political leaders and democratic elections 2011*, 11-34.
- D. G. Lilleker and T. Vedel "The Internet in Campaigns and Elections" in W. H. Dutton (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies 2013*.
- Norris, Pippa. "Campaign Communications" in " in L. Leduc, R. G. Niemi and P. Norris (eds.) *Comparing Democracies – 2, 2002*, pp. 127-147.

WEEK 9 (December 21): How partisanship informs voting

Required Reading

- Dalton, Russell J. 2014. *Citizen politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, ch.9, pp.183-205.
- Flanigan, W. and Nancy H. Zingale. 2006. *The Political Behavior of the American Electorate*, CQ Press, chapters 3-4, pp.61-99.

Readings to go further

- Russell J. Dalton. 2014. "Interpreting Partisan Dealignment in Germany," *German Politics* (2014)1-11.
- Dalton, Russell J. and Martin P. Wattenberg, eds., *Parties without Partisans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, chs. 2-3.
- Brewer, Mark D. 2005. "The Rise of Partisanship and the Expansion of Partisan Conflict within the Electorate." *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 58(2): 219-229.

WEEK 10 (January 11): Attitudes, issues, context and vote choice

Required Reading

- Dalton, Russell J. 2014. *Citizen politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, ch.8 and 10, pp.155-180 and 207-231.
- McAllister, Ian. "The personalization of Politics" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. Oxford University Press, ch.30, pp.571-588.

Readings to go further

- Carmines, Edward. G., and James A. Stimson. "The two faces of issue voting" in Niemi, Richard. G. Herbert F. Weisberg (eds).1993. *Classics in Voting Behavior*, ch.12, pp. 114-118.
- Muddle, C. 1999 "The single-issue Party Thesis: Extreme Right Parties and the Immigration Issue. *West European Politics*, 22(3):182-197.

WEEK 11 (January 18): The economy and voting

Required Reading

- Hellwig, Timothy. "Elections and the Economy" in LeDuc, Lawrence, Richard Niemi, and Pippa Norris (eds.). 2010. *Comparing Democracies 3. Elections and Voting in the 21st Century*, Ch. 9, pp.184-201.
- Niemi, Richard. G. Herbert F. Weisberg, and David C. Kimball (eds.). 2011. *Controversies in Voting Behavior*, chapter 9, pp.167-182.

Readings to go further

- Powell, G. Bingham, and Guy Whitten. 1993. "A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context." *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 73 (2), pp. 391-414.

WEEK 12 (January 25): Women and elections

Required Reading

- Sawer, Marian. "Women and elections" in LeDuc, Lawrence, Richard Niemi, and Pippa Norris (eds.). 2010. *Comparing Democracies 3. Elections and Voting in the 21st Century*, Ch. 10, pp.202-222.
- R. Inglehart and P. Norris "The Developmental theory of the gender gap: Women's and Men's voting behavior in global perspective. "*International Political Science Review* 21, 2000, 441-463.

Readings to go further

- N. Giger "Towards a modern gender gap in Europe? A Comparative Analysis of voting behavior in 12 countries" *The Social Science Journal* 46, 2009, 474-492.