

# IR 220: Elections, Parties, and Coalitions in Comparative Perspective

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Spring 2014  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:25–4:40  
Hylan 203

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday 2:00-3:00pm and by appointment

## Course Overview

This course will focus on party competition and government formation in parliamentary democracies in Western and Central Europe. It will aim to explain voters choices, party strategies, and the origins of governments. It will take a look at elections from the perspective of both parties and voters, and analyze both the pre-election and post-election stages of party competition. The course will explore theories of voting, party systems, and party competition. It will also study pre-election alliances that are formed by parties in order to improve their electoral results as well as their chances to control the government after election. The course will conclude with the analysis of theories of government formation. Throughout the course, the analyzed theories will be used to explain cases of elections and government formation from Central and Western Europe.

## Academic Requirements

The requirements are as follows:

- Class attendance and participation: Students are expected to attend classes, to have read the assigned readings and participate actively in class discussions. They will be graded on knowledge of the material and contribution to the discussion.
- Three out of fifteen possible participation points will be given to students who successfully complete the short assignment due at noon on February 12.
- Three in class midterms during the semester. No final exam. Make-up exams will be given only under the most exceptional circumstances.

## Grading

Grading for the course will be determined as follows:

- Class Participation: 15%
- Midterm I: 30%
- Midterm II: 30%
- Midterm III: 25%

## Readings

In this course we will read a combination of book chapters and articles. Journals as well as some book chapters are accessible through the Library's electronic reserves on Blackboard. I recommend purchasing the following books:

- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Powell, G. Bingham Jr.. 2000. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University of Press.

## Course Schedule

### **January 16: Introduction to the Course**

Reading: none

### **January 21: Introduction to Electoral Systems**

Reading:

- Lijphart. *Patterns of Democracy*. Chapter 8.

### **January 23: Introduction to Party Systems**

Reading:

- Lijphart. *Patterns of Democracy*. Chapter 5
- Sartori, Giovanni. 1990. "A Typology of Party Systems," In Peter Mair (ed), *The West European Party System*. Oxford: Oxford UP: 316-349.

### **January 28: Party Systems 2**

Reading:

- Neto Octavio Amorim, and Gary Cox. 1997. "Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures and the Number of Parties." *American Journal of Political Science* 41(1): 149-174.

### **January 30: Proximity Voting**

Reading:

- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Chapters 1-3.

### **February 4: Strategic Voting and Directional Voting**

Reading:

- Blais and Nadeau. 1996. "Measuring strategic voting: A two-step procedure." *Electoral Studies* 15(1): 39-52.
- Rabinowitz, George and Elaine Macdonald. 1989. "A Directional Theory of Issue Voting." *American Political Science Review* 83: 93-121.

## **February 6: Economic Voting**

### Reading

- GD Whitten and H. Palmer. 1999. "Cross-national analysis of economic voting." *Electoral Studies* 18(1): 49-67.

## **February 11: No Class**

Class Assignment due February 12th at noon and worth 3 participation points.

- Please Read: Kern Holger Lutz and Jens Hainmueller. 2006. "Electoral Balancing, Divided Government and 'Midterm' Loss in German Elections." *Journal of Legislative Studies* 12(2): 127-149.

and answer the following questions:

1. What is "electoral balancing"?
2. Why would voters engage in electoral balancing?
3. What do the terms "unified government" and "divided government" refer to in the case of Germany?

## **February 13: Expressive Voting**

### Reading:

- Schuessler, Alexander A. 2000. "Expressive Voting." *Rationality and Society*. 12(1): 87-119.

## **February 18: Midterm I**

## **February 20: Types of Parties**

### Reading:

- Katz and Mair. "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy. The Emergence of the Cartel Party". *Party Politics* 1(1): 5 -18.

## **February 25: Party Ideologies: Stability and Change**

### Reading:

- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Chapters 7-8.

## **February 27: Party Ideologies: Stability and Change 2**

### Reading:

- Somer-Topcu Zeynep. "Timely Decisions: The Effects of Past National Elections on Party Policy Change." *Journal of Politics* 71(1): 238-248.
- Adams James, Michael Clark, Lawrence Ezrow, and Garrett Glasgow. 2004. "Understanding Change and Stability in Party Ideologies: Do Parties Respond to Public Opinion or to Past Election Results?" *British Journal of Political Science* 34(4): 589-610.

## **March 4: Moderate Parties**

### Reading:

- Ezrow, Lawrence. 2005. "Are Moderate Parties Rewarded in Multiparty Systems? A Pooled Analysis of Western European elections, 1984-1998." *European Journal of Political Research* 44: 881-898.

## **March 6: Extreme Parties**

### Reading:

- Müller - Rommel, Ferdinand. 2002. "The Lifespan and the Political Performance of Green Parties in Western Europe." *Environmental Politics* 11(1): 1-16.
- Ignazi, Piero. 1992. "The Silent Counter Revolution." *European Journal of Political Science* 22: 3-34.

## **March 18: Issue Salience and Issue Ownership**

### Reading:

- Budge, Ian and Dennis Farlie. 1983. "Party Competition- Selective Emphasis or Direct Confrontation?" in *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*. eds. Hans Daalder and Peter Mair. London: Sage Publications. 267-306.

## **March 20: New Issues and New Parties 1**

### Reading:

- Tavits, Margit. 2006. "Party System Change. Testing a Model of New Party Entry." *Party Politics* 12(1): 99-119.
- Rohrschneider. 1993. "New Parties versus Old Left Realignments." *Journal of Politics* 55: 194-234.

## **March 25: New Issues and New Parties 2**

### Reading:

- Meguid, Bonnie M.. *Party Competition between Unequals. Strategies and Electoral Fortunes in Western Europe*. Cambridge University Press. 2007. Chapter 3.

## **March 27: Midterm II**

## **April 1: Electoral Rules and Government Formation**

### Reading:

- Powell, Bingham, Jr.. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*. Chapters 2 and 5.

## **April 3: No Class: Midwest Political Science Association Conference**

## **April 8: Types of Government**

### Reading:

- Lijphart: *Patterns of Democracy*. Chapter 6.
- Bergman, Torbjörn. 1993. "Formation Rules and Minority Governments." *European Journal of Political Research* 23: 55-66.

## **April 10: Government Formation: Institutions**

### Reading:

- Kaare, Strom, Ian Budge, Michael J Laver. 1994. "Constraints on cabinet formation in parliamentary democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 38(2): 303-335.

### **April 15: Pre-Electoral Coalitions**

#### Reading:

- Golder, Sona. 2006. "Pre-Electoral Coalition Formation in Parliamentary Democracies." *British Journal of Political Science* 36(2): 193-212.

### **April 17: Government Coalition Formation**

#### Reading:

- Martin, Lanny W., and Randolph T. Stevenson. 2001. "Government Formation in Parliamentary Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1): 33-50.

### **April 22: Government Termination**

#### Reading:

- Grofman and van Roozendaal. 1997. "Modeling Cabinet Durability and Termination." *British Journal of Political Science* 27(3): 419-451.

### **April 24: Policy and Performance**

#### Reading:

- Powell, Bingham Jr.. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy*. Chapters 9 and 10.

### **April 29: Midterm III**