

University of Rochester Political Science

Psc 586/ECO 582
Theory of Voting and Elections/PE II

Prof. Mark Fey
Spring 2015

Syllabus & Reading List

This course covers much of the modern game-theoretic literature on models of voting and elections. It is meant to expose students to the techniques and models used in this line of research. The course covers both complete and incomplete information models and thus students must have completed Psc584 (or its equivalent) prior to taking this course.

After a review of the Hotelling-Black one-dimensional model of elections, the course examines the many extensions of this basic model. Such extensions include probabilistic voting, policy-motivated candidates, and issues of commitment and agenda control in elections. The next set of topics for the course focuses on models of multi-candidate elections, including models of candidate entry and strategic voting by members of the electorate. Finally, the remainder of the course deals with issues of information in elections, including uncertainty on the part of voters and candidates, and problems associated with private information in elections.

There are three main obligations for students taking the course. Reading the required articles and participating in class is the first and most important of the obligations. The second obligation is taking a turn presenting one of the topics from the reading list. Assignments of topics will be worked out at the first class meeting. The last requirement for the course is a final paper. The choice of topic for the final paper is left open. Some possibilities include a detailed survey of one of the topics of the course (perhaps linked to your presentation topic), an extension of a model discussed in class, or a new model.

Schedule: Starting on the next page is the list of topics and the scheduled readings for the course. We will focus in class on the readings in bold. Naturally, this schedule may change as the semester unfolds.

Jan. 14 Introductory Thoughts and Review

Jan. 21 Policy-Motivated Candidates and Probabilistic Voting

- Calvert (1985); Duggan and Fey (2005); Hinich (1977); Banks and Duggan (2005)

Jan. 28 Valence, Effort, and Electoral Contests

- Meirowitz (2008); Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita (2009); Serra (2010);

Feb. 4 Voter Turnout Models

- Ledyard (1984); Palfrey and Rosenthal (1983); Palfrey and Rosenthal (1985); Kalandrakis (2009)

Feb. 11 Candidate Entry

- Palfrey (1984); Greenberg and Shepsle (1987); Weber (1992); Osborne (1993)

Feb. 18 Citizen Candidates and Voting for Policies

- Feddersen (1992); Osborne and Slivinski (1996); Besley and Coate (1997)

Feb. 25 Strategic Voting and Duverger's Law

- Palfrey (1989); Myerson and Weber (1993); Fey (1997); Feddersen et al. (1990); Cox (1994); Morelli (2004)

Mar. 4 Elections with Multiple Candidates and Alternative Voting Systems

- Cox (1987); Cox (1990); Dellis (2011)

Mar. 11 Spring break!

Mar. 18 Private Information, the Swing Voter's Curse, and Jury Theorems

- Austen-Smith and Banks (1996); Feddersen and Pesendorfer (1996); Feddersen and Pesendorfer (1997); Fey and Kim (2002)

Mar. 25 Pandering

- Canes-Wrone et al. (2001); Maskin and Tirole (2004); Fox (2007)

Apr. 1 Public Information and Polls

- Meirowitz (2005); Goeree and Großer (2007); Taylor and Yildirim (2010)

Apr. 8 Aggregate Uncertainty

- Myatt 2007; Myatt 2012

Apr. 15 Campaigns and Signaling

- Banks (1990); Callander and Wilkie (2007); Callander (2008); Kartik and McAfee (2007); Acemoglu et al. (2013)

Apr. 22 Special Interests and Voting

- Coate and Morris (1995); Dixit and Londregan (1995) Ashworth (2006)

Apr. 29 Final Class

References

- Acemoglu, Daron, Georgy Egorov, and Konstantin Sonin 2013. "A political theory of populism," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 128, 771–805.
- Ashworth, Scott 2006. "Campaign finance and voter welfare with entrenched incumbents," *American Political Science Review*, 100, 55–68.
- Ashworth, Scott and Ethan Bueno de Mesquita 2009. "Elections with platform and valence competition," *Games and Economic Behavior*, 67, 191–216.
- Austen-Smith, David and Jeffrey S. Banks 1996. "Information Aggregation, Rationality, and the Condorcet Jury Theorem," *American Political Science Review*, 90, 34–45. (JSTOR).
- Banks, Jeffrey S. 1990. "A Model of Electoral Competition with Incomplete Information," *Journal of Economic Theory*, 50, 309–325.
- Banks, Jeffrey S. and John Duggan 2005. "Probabilistic Voting in the Spatial Model of Elections: The Theory of Office-motivated Candidates." In Austen-Smith, David and John Duggan, eds., *Social Choice and Strategic Decisions*, pages 15–56. Berlin: Springer. (link).
- Besley, Timothy and Stephen Coate 1997. "An Economic Model of Representative Democracy," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112, 85–114. (JSTOR).
- Callander, Steven 2008. "Political motivations," *Review of Economic Studies*, 75, 671–697.
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- Callander, Steven and Simon Wilkie 2007. "Lies, damned lies, and political campaigns," *Games and Economic Behavior*, 60, 262–286.
- Calvert, Randall L. 1985. "Robustness of the Multidimensional Voting Model: Candidate Motivations, Uncertainty, and Convergence," *American Journal of Political Science*, 29, 69–95. (JSTOR).
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, Michael C. Herron, and Kenneth W. Shotts 2001. "Leadership and pandering: A theory of executive policymaking," *American Journal of Political Science*, pages 532–550.

- Coate, Stephen and Stephen Morris 1995. "On the form of transfers to special interests," *Journal of Political Economy*, 103, 1210–1235.
- Cox, Gary W. 1987. "Electoral Equilibrium under Alternative Voting Institutions," *American Journal of Political Science*, 31, 82–108. (JSTOR).
- Cox, Gary W. 1990. "Centripital and Centrifugal Incentives in Electoral Systems," *American Journal of Political Science*, 34, 903–935. (JSTOR).
- Cox, Gary W. 1994. "Strategic Voting Equilibria Under the Single Non-Transferable Vote," *American Political Science Review*, 88, 608–621. (JSTOR).
- Dellis, Arnaud 2011. "The Two-Party System under Alternative Voting Procedures.
- Dixit, Avinash and John Londregan 1995. "Redistributive Politics and Economic Efficiency," *American Political Science Review*, 89, 856–866. (JSTOR).
- Duggan, John and Mark Fey 2005. "Electoral Competition with Policy-Motivated Candidates," *Games and Economic Behavior*, 51, 490–522. (link).
- Feddersen, Timothy J. 1992. "A Voting Model Implying Duverger's Law and Positive Turnout," *American Journal of Political Science*, 36, 938–962. (JSTOR).
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- Feddersen, Timothy J. and Wolfgang Pesendorfer 1996. "The Swing Voter's Curse," *American Economic Review*, 86, 408–424. (JSTOR).
- Feddersen, Timothy J. and Wolfgang Pesendorfer 1997. "Voting Behavior and Information Aggregation in Elections With Private Information," *Econometrica*, 65, 1029–1058. (JSTOR).
- Feddersen, Timothy J., Itai Sened, and Stephen G. Wright 1990. "Sophisticated Voting and Candidate Entry Under Plurality Rule," *American Journal of Political Science*, 34, 1005–1016. (JSTOR).

- Fey, Mark 1997. "Stability and Coordination in Duverger's Law: A Formal Model of Pre-Election Polls and Strategic Voting," *American Political Science Review*, 91, 135-147. (JSTOR).
- Fey, Mark and Jaehoon Kim 2002. "A Note on the Swing Voter's Curse," *American Economic Review*, 92, 1264-1268. (JSTOR).
- Fox, Justin 2007. "Government transparency and policymaking," *Public Choice*, 131, 23-44.
- Goeree, Jacob and Jens Großer 2007. "Welfare reducing polls," *Economic Theory*, 31, 51-68.
- Greenberg, Joseph and Kenneth A. Shepsle 1987. "The Effects of Electoral Rewards in Multiparty Competition with Entry," *American Political Science Review*, 81, 525-537. (JSTOR).
- Hinich, Melvin J. 1977. "Equilibrium in Spatial Voting: The Median Voter Result Is An Artifact," *Journal of Economic Theory*, 16, 208-219.
- Kalandrakis, Tasos 2009. "Robust rational turnout," *Economic Theory*, 41, 317-343.
- Kartik, Navin and Preston McAfee 2007. "Signaling character in electoral competition," *American Economic Review*, 97, 852-870.
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- Meirowitz, Adam 2008. "Electoral contests, incumbency advantages, and campaign finance," *The Journal of Politics*, 70, 681-699.
- Morelli, Massimo 2004. "Party formation and policy outcomes under different electoral systems," *Review of Economic Studies*, 71, 829-853.

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- Osborne, Martin J. 1993. "Candidate Positioning and Entry in a Political Competition," *Games and Economic Behavior*, 5, 133-151. (link).
- Osborne, Martin J. and Al Slivinski 1996. "A Model of Political Competition with Citizen-Candidates," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 111, 65-96. (JSTOR).
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