University of Rochester Political Science

Psc 586   Prof. Mark Fey
Theory of Voting and Elections   Fall 2018

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.

Week 1 Introductory Thoughts and Review

Week 2 Policy-Motivated Candidates and Probabilistic Voting

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

Week 3 Candidate Quality

- Ansolabehere and Snyder (2000); **Groseclose (2001)**; Aragones and Palfrey (2002); **Aragonès and Xefteris (2012)**

Week 4 Voter Turnout Models

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

Week 5 Candidate Entry

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

Week 6 Citizen Candidates and Voting for Policies

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

Week 7 Strategic Voting and Duverger's Law

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

Week 8 Elections with Multiple Candidates and Alternative Voting Systems

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

Week 9 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)

Week 10 Pandering

- **Canes-Wrone et al. (2001)**; Ashworth and Shotts (2010); **Kartik et al. (2015)**

Week 11 Information Acquisition

- **Martinelli (2006)**; Gerardi and Yariv (2008); **Tyson (2016)**

Week 12 Aggregate Uncertainty

- **Myatt (2007)**; **Acharya and Meirowitz (2017)**; Myatt 2012

Week 13 Polarization and Information

- **Grosser and Palfrey (2014)**; **Di Lonardo (2017)**; Aragonès and Xefteris (2017)

Week 14 Protest Voting

- **Shotts (2006)**; Meirowitz and Shotts (2009); **Myatt (2017)**

Week 15 Storable Votes and Quadratic Voting

- Casella (2005); **Lalley and Weyl (2018) Eguia and Xefteris (2018)**

References

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