

Course Syllabus  
Spring 2014  
Mondays 14:45-16:45

## **Party Competition and Ideology in Europe**

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## Course Description

This course addresses the dynamics of political competition in European democracies. First, it concentrates on political parties as the central actors summarizing and translating individual preferences into political platforms, debated in the public sphere, and contested at the ballot boxes and on parliamentary floors. The course addresses the historical development of political parties, it questions the bases for ideological formation, as well as the strategies parties employ under different competitive conditions. Furthermore, the course addresses recent debates in the study of parties concerning the changing institutional and ideological features of party organizations. The course also considers the formation of voter preferences, and their subsequent vote choice. In doing so, it connects the study of party ideology and strategy with the study of social cleavages and issue preferences among voters, drawing conclusions about the core functioning of democracy.

The course presents the key theoretical approaches to the study of parties, party competition and vote choice in the form of lectures, followed by open discussion. In addition, the course introduces some of the key sources of information concerning party competition, and asks students to engage in their own research based on these and other sources in the format of group and individual work.

## Readings

This document provides a list of readings for each class session. All required readings will be made available to the students in electronic format. I expect all students to read the required readings *prior* to class. Students may wish to consult the additional readings for reference or when preparing their course study.

## Evaluation

The evaluation of the course will be based on active **preparation and participation (20%)**. I expect students to have read the required reading(s) for each class, and be ready to engage in a discussion of the relevant topics.

Each student will be expected to prepare a study on a selected topic on party competition in Europe. The students will choose to concentrate on specific party families, party systems or issues in party competition. First, students will be asked to present their preliminary findings to the class in the form of an **oral presentation (30%)**. Eventually, each student will submit the final report of the study in the form of an **essay (50%)**. We will spend our 4th class on discussing methods, and possible topics for the study.

## Course Schedule

### 1. Why do we need parties?

Political parties are argued to be indispensable for democracy, yet they sometimes engage in practices that seem to undermine democratic governance. Why do we have political parties? What are their functions and how well do parties carry them out?

*Required reading:*

Lipset (2000) "On the Indispensability of Parties"

*Other readings:*

Aldrich (2011) *Why Parties?*. U of Chicago Press.

## 2. Origins of parties

Political parties originate from long-standing historical conflicts in society. What are the key conflicts that gave rise to party organization? How have they been translated into parties? Why did party systems stabilize?

*Required reading:*

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) "Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: an introduction." Free Press

## 3. Party organization

Political parties are expected to represent citizen interests. But increasingly, parties have weak contacts with society. Are parties becoming insulated vehicles of power? Do they transmit voter interests?

*Required reading:*

Katz and Mair (1995) "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy". Party Politics

*Other readings:*

Koole (1996) "Cadre, Catch-all or Cartel?" Party Politics.

Krouwel (2013) *Party Transformations in European Democracies*. SUNY Press

Kirchheimer. (1990) "The Catch-All Party." In Peter Mair (ed) *The West European Party System*. OUP. 50-59.

## 4. Methods of studying parties and party competition

This class will demonstrate some datasets used in assessing political parties and party competition. We will also discuss the course study, and students will be able to consider different topics to research.

## 5. Parties and Party Systems

Political parties are responsive organisms that exist in the context of other parties. What is a party system? How can we understand and study it? [Presentations start this week]

*Required reading:*

Sartori (1990) “A Typology of Party Systems” In Peter Mair (ed), *The West European Party System*. OUP

*Other readings:*

Sartori (1976) *Parties and party systems*. Cambridge UP.

Mair (1997) *Party system change*. OUP

Duverger (1990) “The Two-Party System and the Multiparty System” in Peter Mair (ed), *The West European Party System*. OUP.

Dahl (1990) “Party Systems and Patterns of Opposition” In Peter Mair (ed), *The West European Party System*. OUP.

Blondel (1990) “Types of Party System” In Peter Mair (ed), *The West European Party System*. OUP

## 6. Class voting and its decline

Social class has been considered as central in the formation of voter identification and voting behavior. The effect of class on vote has, however, been altered by social, economic and technological change. Does class still matter in politics? Has the structuring effect of class thawed? Or has class transformed?

*Required reading:*

Franklin (1984) "How the Decline of Class Voting Opened the Way to Radical Change in British Politics". BJPS

*Other readings:*

Franklin et al. (1992) *Electoral Change: Responses to Evolving Social and Attitudinal Structures in Western Countries*. Cambridge U Press.

Kriesi (1998) "The transformation of cleavage politics". EJPR.

Evans (2000) "The Continued Significance of Class Voting". Annual Review of Political Science

Knutsen (2006) *Class Voting in Western Europe - A Comparative Longitudinal Study*. Lenham.

## 7. Models of party competition

Political parties are expected to respond to voter preferences and to each other. How can we conceptualize these competitive dynamics? How can we assess ideological positions and emphasis of certain political problems by political parties?

*Required reading:*

TBA

*Other readings:*

Downs (1957) *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper and Row

Rabinowitz and MacDonald (1989). "A Directional Theory of Issue Voting"  
APSR

Budge and Farlie (1983) *Explaining and Predicting Elections*. Allen and  
Unwin.

Petrocik (1996) "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections." AJPS

Stokes (1963) "Spatial Models of Party Competition". APSR

## **8. Dimensionality and party competition**

To become comprehensible and debatable demands, political preferences must be simplified into issue bundles or 'issue dimensions'. The translation of political issues into coherent value-packages is at the heart of political competition. How is this done? And to whose benefit?

*Required reading:*

Riker (1986) *The Art of Political Manipulation* Yale UP.

*Other reading:*

Meguid (2005) "Competition Between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success" APSR

Meguid (2008) *Party Competition Between Unequals: Strategies and Electoral Fortunes in Western Europe* Cambridge UP.

Rovny (2012) "Who Emphasizes and Who Blurs? Party Strategies in Multidimensional Competition" EPSR

## 9. Party System Change: Postmaterialism

Technological, economic, and social change of the post-war era has altered people's needs and concerns. Have the changes of the late 20th century lead to a value shift that alters political preferences and modes of participation?

*Required reading:*

Inglehart (1971) "The Silent Revolution in Europe" APSR.

Kriesi (2010) "Restructuration of Partisan Politics and the Emergence of a New Cleavage Based on Values" WEP.

*Other reading:*

Kitschelt (1988) "Left-Libertarian Parties: Explaining Innovation in Competitive Party Systems" World Politics.

Kitschelt (1994) *The Transformation of European Social Democracy* Cambridge UP.

## 10) Reactions to post-materialism: the radical right

While post-materialism increased the salience of individualism and ushered in social-liberal values, it provoked a reaction of authority-minded traditionalism. What explains the success of radical right parties in Europe? Who supports these parties and why?

*Required reading:*

Golder (2003) "Explaining Variation In The Success Of Extreme Right Parties In Western Europe" CPS

*Other reading:*

Ivarsflatten (2005) “The vulnerable populist right parties” EJPR

Rovny (2013) “Where do radical right parties stand?” EPSR

## 11. Party competition in Eastern Europe

Since the collapse of communism, eastern European societies have experienced the rise of democratic competitive politics. What structures competitive politics after communism?

*Required reading:*

Kitschelt (1995) “Formation of party cleavages in post-communist democracies” *Party Politics*.

*Other reading:*

Grzymala-Busse and Innes (2003) “Great expectations: The EU and domestic political competition in East Central Europe” *EEPS*

Vachudova (2005) *Europe undivided: democracy, leverage, and integration after communism*. OUP

Vachudova and Hooghe (2009) “Postcommunist politics in a magnetic field” *CEP*

Marks et al. (2006) “Party Competition and European Integration in the East and West” *CPS*.

## 12. Party competition at the European level

Though a complex institution, the European Union functions a lot like a political system. Inside, we find particular but lively political competition. How does political contestation work within the EU? How do political parties

function inside the EU institutions, and how are they affected by it?

*Required reading:*

Hix (2009) "What to Expect in the 2009-14 European Parliament." SEIPS

*Other reading:*

Hix et al. (2006) *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament* Cambridge UP.

Corbett et al. (2007) *The European Parliament* John Harper

Poguntke et al. (eds) (2007) *Europeanization of National Political Parties* Routledge.

Mair (2004) "The limited impact of Europe on national party systems". WEP