

**Syllabus for
Selected Topics in Comparative Politics: Legislative Politics
University of Mannheim, MA/PhD program Political Science, Fall 2012**

Course:

Seminar: Tuesday 10:15–13:30pm, B6 A1.03, 4 Sep–4 Dec 2012

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Legislatures are, at least formally, the key policy-making institutions in modern democracies. They represent and aggregate constituent interests, pass laws and approve government budgets, monitor bureaucracies, and, in European-style, parliamentary democracies choose governments. Yet, any single link in this chain of multiple delegations involves reciprocal dependencies and accountabilities that put constraints on what actors can do and how they do it. Institutions certainly matter but how and when and to what extent do they shape the way legislators feel, behave and act?

The objective of this course is to prepare you for professional research into legislative politics. The course has some breadth in coverage in the sense that it provides a graduate-level overview of different areas such as electoral competition, legislative bargaining, coalition formation, information transmission, agenda-setting, legislative organization, voting and cohesion, delegation to bureaucratic authorities, and seminal models used in these areas. It is also narrow in the sense that the emphasis is on approaches that use and apply formal models in these areas. When do legislatures grants discretionary power to bureaucrats and why should they do that at all? What drives legislators' decisions and how does that vary across different types of electoral and parliamentary institutions? The ultimate goal is to identify interesting and important questions in the field, and to think about the ways in

which research can be designed to get at those questions. Throughout the semester we will meet to pore over a set of seminal papers and important books. The focus here is on the theoretical argument. What is the substantive argument? What do we have to assume to make the argument? What type of model is used and how do we actually arrive at the conclusions? We will also have a look at one or the other piece that exemplifies empirical strategies and evidence.

Prerequisites: As most papers and books in this area use formal models to study legislative politics, students are expected to have completed the MA course in game theory or, at least, are willing to work through these models.

Readings: Students must complete the required reading by class time each week and come prepared to engage in an in-depth discussion of each text.

Assessment: Essay: Students are required to write an essay of journal article length. The essay actually is a research proposal that draws some hypotheses from the theoretical literature and lays out an empirical strategy for testing them. The idea is to pick an interesting question or puzzle from the course material and to propose a research design for answering it. Think of its structure in the following way:

- A description of the "puzzle" that you are trying to solve.
- A clear and succinct statement of a theoretical argument on an important question that you extract from the literature or develop yourself. This will be the main part of your paper.
- An empirical research strategy including: a) a characterization of the population of cases to which the theoretical argument/hypotheses apply, and the description of a sample (or way of sampling) from this population; b) a specification of dependent and independent variables and the form of their relationship, their operationalization; c) A preliminary assessment or 'plausibility probe' based on brief examination of one or more cases from a sample, or a 'quick' coding of variables for a simple descriptive analysis.

Essays are due in January and should be submitted via email. In addition, a hardcopy should be submitted to the political economy main office. Please ensure that your name and course title appear on the first page and the pages are numbered. Do not submit the paper in a plastic folder or binder. A single staple will suffice.

Course Outline:

Overview

Laver, M. (2006). Legislatures and parliaments. In Wittman, D. and Weingast, B. E., editors, *The Oxford handbook of political economy*, pages 121–140. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Electoral competition

Downs, A. (1957). *An economic theory of democracy*. Harper, New York.

Wittman, D. (1977). Candidates with policy preferences: A dynamic model. *Journal of Economic Theory*, 14(1):180–189.

Groseclose, T. (2001). A model of candidate location when one candidate has a valence advantage. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(4):862–886.

Adams, J., Merrill, S., and Grofman, B. (2005). *A unified theory of party competition: A cross-national analysis integrating spatial and behavioral factors*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Ansolabehere, S. and Snyder, J. M. (2000). Valence politics and equilibrium in spatial election models. *Public Choice*, 103(3/4):327–336.

Schofield, N. (2007). The mean voter theorem: Necessary and sufficient conditions for convergent equilibrium. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 74(3):965–980.

Legislative Bargaining

Baron, D. P. and Ferejohn, J. A. (1989). Bargaining in legislatures. *The American Political Science Review*, 83(4):1181–1206.

Banks, J. S. and Duggan, J. (2000). A bargaining model of collective choice. *The American Political Science Review*, 94(1):73–88.

Coalition Formation

Laver, M. and Schofield, N. (2001). *Multiparty government : the politics of coalition in*

Europe: Ann Arbor paperbacks. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor and Mich.

Laver, M. and Shepsle, K. A. (1996). *Making and breaking governments : cabinets and legislatures in parliamentary democracies: Political economy of institutions and decisions.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge u.a.

Baron, D. P. (1991). A spatial bargaining theory of government formation in parliamentary systems. *The American Political Science Review*, 85(1):137–164.

Baron, D. P., Diermeier, D., and Fong, P. (2012). A dynamic theory of parliamentary democracy. *Economic Theory*, 49(3):703–738.

Martin, L. W. and Stevenson, R. T. (2001). Government formation in parliamentary democracies. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(1):33–50.

Agenda-setting and Policy-making

Romer, T. and Rosenthal, H. (1978). Political resource allocation, controlled agendas, and the status quo. *Public Choice*, 33(4):27–43.

Krehbiel, K. (1998). *Pivotal politics: A theory of U.S. lawmaking.* University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Cox, G. W. and McCubbins, M. D. (1993). *Legislative leviathan : party government in the House: California series on social choice and political economy ; 23.* University of California Press, Berkeley and Calif. u.a.

Cameron, C. M. (2000). *Veto bargaining : presidents and the politics of negative power: Political economy of institutions and decisions.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge u.a.

Tsebelis, G. (1994). The power of the european parliament as a conditional agenda setter. *The American Political Science Review*, 88(1):128–142.

Austen-Smith and Banks (1988)

Information transmission

Crawford, V. P. and Sobel, J. (1982). Strategic information transmission. *Econometrica*,

50(6):1431–1451.

Gilligan, T. W. and Krehbiel, K. (1987). Collective decisionmaking and standing committees: an informational rationale for restrictive amendment procedures. *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization*, 3(2):287–335.

Austen-Smith, D. (1990). Information transmission in debate. *American Journal of Political Science*, 34(1):124–152.

Austen-Smith, D. (1996). Information aggregation, rationality, and the condorcet jury theorem. *The American Political Science Review*, 90(1):34–45.

Feddersen, T. and Pesendorfer, W. (1998). Convicting the innocent: The inferiority of unanimous jury verdicts under strategic voting. *The American Political Science Review*, 92(1):23–35.

Austen-Smith, D. (2006). Deliberation, preference uncertainty, and voting rules. *The American Political Science Review*, 100(2):209–217.

Committees and legislative organization

Shepsle, K. A. and Weingast, B. R. (1987). The institutional foundations of committee power. *The American Political Science Review*, 81(1):85–104.

Weingast, B. R. and Marshall, W. J. (1988). The industrial organization of congress; or, why legislatures, like firms, are not organized as markets. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 96(1):132–163.

Voting and Cohesion

Huber, J. D. (1992). Restrictive legislative procedures in france and the united states. *The American Political Science Review*, 86(3):675–687.

Kam, C. J. (2009). *Party discipline and parliamentary politics*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1 edition.

Bowler, S., Farrell, D. M., and Katz, R. S. (1999). *Party discipline and parliamentary government*. Ohio State University Press, Columbus.

Clinton, J., Jackman, S., and Rivers, D. (2004). The statistical analysis of roll call data. *The American Political Science Review*, 98(2):355–370.

Bräuninger, T., Brunner, M., and Däubler, T. (2012). Personal vote-seeking in flexible list systems: How electoral incentives shape belgian mps' bill initiation behaviour. *European Journal of Political Research*, 51(5):607–645.