

Course description

BAWC

Political parties in 21st century Europe

2014-2015

Bachelor Course (12 ECT)
Political Parties in 21st Century Europe
Semester 1 2014-1015
University of Amsterdam

Course objectives

At the end of the course students will have:

- Considerable knowledge about the academic literature on political parties, party competition, party systems and party change.
- Gained experience in relating academic research to the reality of contemporary European politics and discussing normative consequences of political behavior.
- Further developed important skills like academic writing, presenting and defending a position.

And the student will be able to:

- Follow and take part in the academic and societal debate on the role of political parties in representative democracies.

Course description

Within representative democracies, political parties constitute the fundamental link between citizens and the state. Yet, political parties in 21st century Europe are challenged by trends such as declining party loyalty and membership levels, growing electoral volatility, new issues that cross-cut existing lines of political division and new types of competitors like populist parties. Some argue that established parties have lost touch with society and have become so-called “cartel parties”; yet, at the same time, the parties challenging the status-quo are unrealistic government alternatives. One of today’s most stringent questions in political science is therefore whether one of the core institutions of representative democracy, the party, is facing a crisis.

This course offers a broad introduction to political parties, party competition, party change, and party systems in a comparative European perspective. Amongst others we will discuss why parties are born and why they die. Is it a question of supply, demand, or electoral institutions? And how do parties compete in order to survive: what is the role of policy positions, selective issue emphases and frames? Since patterns of party competition have consequences for the structure of a party system, we will also examine what the different party systems of Europe look like. Are they all structured along the same conflicts lines? Another interesting question is when parties change; either in terms of party organization or policy platform. Are parties utility-maximizers, or are they “boundedly rational”, implying that they will only change in case external shocks such as poor electoral performance tell them something is wrong? And how have established actors like Conservatives, Liberals and Social Democrats reacted to new competitors (so-called niche parties) like populist parties? Besides finding an answer to these questions, we will also discuss the normative consequences of the political behavior that we observe.

The course literature will consist of theoretical, empirical and normative articles and book chapters. We will read some of the classics (e.g., Schattschneider) but mostly focus on the current state-of-the-art. Besides acquiring knowledge, a fundamental aspect of the course is to translate the academic literature to the political world outside. By means of case studies we will examine to what extent the literature that we have studied can help explain the behavior of real parties in Western Europe like the Danish People’s

Party, the Dutch Christian Democrats and the Italian Lega Nord. Moreover, we will invite a spin doctor of a political party to stay in touch with the real world.

Course Instructor

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Send e-mail to make appointment for a personal meeting

Time and location

Wednesday 2-5 pm REC J/K B22

Literature

The literature consists of journal articles and book chapters (see list below for an overview of the literature for each week). The book chapters will be made available on UvA blackboard (<https://blackboard.uva.nl/>), while all journal articles can be accessed from the UvA digital library. Note that one has to log in from an UvA computer to access the journal articles. To access these articles from home, UvA VPN must be installed (<http://student.uva.nl/pol/az/content3/vpn-toegang-tot-het-uva-netwerk/uvavpn.html>).

Grading

The final course grade is based for 50% on students' participation during the weekly meetings and for 50% on a final essay. The "participation grade" is based on three components: a) the quality of the discussion questions that need to be handed in before 11 of 14 meetings (20%, see A for requirements), b) the quality of the presentation held by the student (25%, see B for requirements), c) his/her performance as a discussant following a colleague's presentation (5%, see C for requirements). The grade for the final paper (50%) is based on the contents, structure, style and originality of the student's paper. For more details see D.

Thus, the final grade can be calculated by means of the following formula:

Final grade = Quality of discussion questions (20%) + Quality of presentation (25%) + Performance as discussant (5%) + Final paper (50%).

In order to pass this course there **are 4 minimum requirements**: a) students must attend at least 12 of the 14 weekly meetings, b) students must prepare discussion questions before 11 of the 14 meetings (see A), c) students must deliver a presentation (see B), and d) students must act as a discussant (see C).

In case the final grade is below 5.50, **only the final paper may be resubmitted before Friday January**

30th 5 pm. This second chance **only applies to students that have met the 4 minimum requirements** above and the **maximum grade for the final paper will be a 6** (out of 10).

- A) **Each Monday before 5 pm** (with the exception of 1-9) students need to e-mail two discussion questions to the course instructor. The two questions should refer to at least two *different* articles/chapters that are on the literature list for the upcoming meeting on Wednesday. The questions need to be handed in on Monday already, as they will be used by the instructor to structure the meeting. **Hence, question memos that are handed in after the deadline will be graded 1 (out of 10).** Questions may take two forms: either the student points to an aspect in the text that is unclear to him/her and that should be clarified during the meeting, or s/he points to an aspect that s/he finds unconvincing and wishes to discuss during class. Both questions should be clearly introduced and motivated (1 A4). In other words, it should be explained why a fragment is unclear or why there are good reasons to question a particular argument. On 5-11 there will be guest lectures and no academic literature is scheduled. In that week discussion questions should be directed to the guest lecturers. What would you like to know about their work? The preparatory question memos will be graded at three different times during the course. First, the student will receive feedback on his/her first 3 memos, then on memo 4-7 and finally on memo 8-11. The weighted average (first 3 memos count for 3/11, memo 4-7 and 8-11 both for 4/11) of these three grades will determine the final grade for the discussion questions.
- B) Each student (some in pairs) will give a presentation of approximately 30 minutes about a particular party system. The countries that will be covered are listed in the weekly program below. The aim of the presentations is that important concepts and insights from the literature are applied in a practical way. To what extent do they help us understand the number of parties, dynamics of party system change and types of parties that compete elections in the real world? Furthermore, these presentations will increase our practical knowledge about foreign party systems. The presentation should at least give an answer to the following questions:
- What kind of party system is country A (e.g. one-party system, hegemonic party system, extreme multiparty system)?
 - What are the electoral rules in party system A (e.g. party list proportional representation, first-past-the-post, etc.) and could there be a link between a country's electoral rules and its type of party system?
 - What kind of parties currently inhabit party system A (e.g. party families, or types of parties).
 - If you compare the structure of party system A over the past five decades (e.g. in terms of number of parties, type of parties, dimensions of party competition, important issues) over time, what would you say are the most important changes?
 - If we turn to the last two decades, what kind of new parties have entered the party system and become electorally successful? Could you describe these parties (e.g. in terms of party family, issue interests, or type of party) and give an explanation for their success?
 - How have these parties changed the playing field of established parties (e.g. increased dimensionality of the party system)?
 - How have established parties reacted to their challenge (e.g. copied their policies, ignored them).
 - Have these new contenders joined governing coalitions and was their participation successful?

The student should clarify his/her views on the above questions with empirical data if possible. Relevant information can be found in the parlgov database (<http://www.parl.gov.org/>), political

country yearbooks (<http://www.politicaldatayearbook.com/>) and it is strongly encouraged to consult additional academic literature. A presentation schedule will be drafted during the first meeting. Note that it is **not allowed to give a presentation about the party system of your own country.**

- C) Each student (some in pairs) will act as a discussant once. The discussant discusses the strengths of the presentation, but in a *diplomatic way*, s/he also points to questions that have not (completely) been answered by the presenter(s) and which can be discussed with the rest of the group. The above list of questions may provide some guidance to the discussant. The presenter(s) should send their PowerPoint presentation to the discussant(s) on Monday before 5 pm so that discussants have sufficient time to prepare.
- D) On **Monday 15-12** students will hand in a final essay **in hard-copy and through Ephorus before 5 pm**. This essay (6000 words, +/- 10%) takes the form of a journal article and addresses a topic that has been covered throughout the course. The article is structured as follows. Introduction → Research Question → Methodology → Results → Conclusion and discussion. The paper will be evaluated on the following grounds: contents, style (e.g. writing style, grammar, correct referencing) and originality. A literature review without empirical data analysis is allowed, as research methods lie beyond the scope of this course. It will be rewarded, however, if students present descriptive information (e.g. tables, graphs) to substantiate their claims. The literature list should also include additional journal articles or books that were not on the course list. Finally, the paper must satisfy **two minimum requirement**: a) in-text citations and a reference list must be provided, b) sufficient care to grammar and spelling must be apparent, i.e., the manuscript may not contain more than 10 serious errors (these requirements will be relaxed somewhat for students whose native tongue is not English). **If one of these requirements has not been met according to the course instructor, the paper will be graded a 1** (out of 10). Students should hand in an **outline of their paper by e-mail on 21-11** in order to receive feedback from the instructor.

All assignments need to be **written in English**. Also beware that except for duo presentations, **all assignments are individual**. If it is impossible for the instructor to evaluate an assignment as such, the paper will be graded 1 (out of 10). In case plagiarism is suspected, this will also be reported to the examination committee of the university.

Course program by week

Introduction to party systems 1: 03-09-2014

Blondel, J. (1990) 'Types of party systems', in Peter Mair (ed.) *The West European Party System*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 302-310.

Sartori, G (1990) 'A typology of party systems', in Peter Mair (ed.) *The West European Party System*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 316-349.

Introduction to party systems 2: 10-09-2014

Lipset, S.M. and Rokkan, S. (1990) 'Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments', in Peter Mair (ed.) *The West European Party System*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 91-111.

Mair, P. and Mudde, C. (1998) 'The party family and its study', *Annual Review of Political Science* 1: 211-229.

Schattschneider, E.E. 'The Semisovereign people. A realist's View of Democracy in America'. Hinsdale: The Dryden Press, pp. 60-75

Presentation: Belgium

Number of parties, party birth & party death: 17-09-2014

Ezrow, L. (2008) 'Parties' Policy Programmes and the Dog that Didn't Bark: No Evidence that Proportional Systems Promote Extreme Party Positioning', *British Journal of Political Science* 38(3): 479-497.

Lowery, D., Van Witteloostuijn, A., Peli, G., Brasher, H., Otjes, S., and Gherghina, S. (2013) 'Policy agendas and birth and death of political parties', *Party Politics* 19(3), 381-407

Riker, W.H. (1982) 'The Two-party System and Duverger's Law: an Essay on the History of Political Science', *The American Political Science Review* 76(4): 753-766.

Tavits, M. (2006) 'Party system change: Testing a model of new party entry', *Party Politics* 12(1): 99-119.

Presentation: Denmark

Classifying political parties: 24-09-2014

De Vries, C.E. and Hobolt, S.B. (2012) 'When Dimensions Collide: The Electoral Success of Issue Entrepreneurs', *European Union Politics* 13(2): **ONLY 250-252.**

Katz, R.S. and Mair, P. (1995) 'Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy. The Emergence of the Cartel Party', *Party Politics* 1(1): 5-28. :

McDonnell, D. (2013) 'Silvio Berlusconi's Personal Parties: From Forza Italia to the Popolo Della Libertà', *Political Studies* 61: 217-233.

Meguid, B. M. (2005) 'Competition between unequals: The role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success', *The American Political Science Review* 99(3): **ONLY 347-348.**

Wolinetz, S.B. (2003) 'Beyond the catch-all party: approaches to the study of parties and party organization in contemporary democracies', in Richard Gunther, José Ramón Montero and Juan J. Linz (eds.) *Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 136-164.

Presentation: France

Modes of party competition: 01-10-2014

Budge, I. and Farlie, D.J. (1983) 'Predicting and explaining elections: issue effects and party strategies in

twenty-three democracies', London: George Allen & Unwin, pp. 21-26

Downs, A. (1957) 'An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy', *Journal of Political Economy* 65 (2): 135-150.

MacDonald, S.E., Listhaug, O. and Rabinowitz, G. (1991) 'Issue and Party Support in Multiparty Systems', *American Political Science Review* 85(4): 1107-1131.

Stokes, D. E. (1963) 'Spatial Models of Party Competition', *The American Political Science Review* 57(2): 368-377.

Presentation: UK

Rational choice theory and party behavior: 8-10-2014

Adams, J. (2012) Causes and Electoral Consequences of Party Policy Shifts in Multiparty Elections: Theoretical Results and Empirical Evidence. *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 401–419.

Harmel, Robert and Kenneth Janda (1994) 'An integrated theory of party goals and party change', *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 6(3): **Only 268-269.**

Strøm, K. (1990) 'A behavioral theory of competitive political parties', *American Journal of Political Science* 34(2): 565-598.

Presentation: Italy

Behavioral theories and party behavior: 15-10-2014

Bendor, J., Diermeier, D., Siegel, D.A. and Ting, M.M. (2011) 'A Behavioral Theory of Elections', Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 1-21

Burchell, J. (2001) 'Evolving or Conforming? Assessing Organizational Reform Within European Green Parties', *West European Politics* 24(3): 113-134.

Harmel, Robert and Kenneth Janda (1994) 'An integrated theory of party goals and party change', *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 6(3): **Only 259-287.**

Schumacher, G., Van de Wardt, M., Vis, B. and Baggesen-Klitgaard, M. (2014) 'How aspiration to office moderates the impact of government participation on party platform change'. Unpublished Manuscript: available from blackboard.

Presentation: Germany

The electoral landscape: changing preferences and increasing volatility: 29-10-2014

Dalton, R. (2000). The Decline of Party Identifications, in: Dalton R.J. and M. Wattenberg (red.) *Parties without Partisans*, pp. 19-36.

Dalton, R. , I. McAllister and M. Wattenberg (2000) The Consequences of Partisan Dealignment, in: Dalton R.J. en M. Wattenberg (red.) *Parties without Partisans*, p. 37-63.

Inglehart, R.F. (1971) 'The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies', *American Political Science Review* 65(4): 991-1017.

Scarrow, D. and Gezgor, B. (2010) 'Declining Memberships, changing members? European political party members in a new era', *Party Politics* 16(6): 823-843.

Presentation: Switzerland

Guest lectures: 05-11-2014

Guest lectures by Jasper Blom (director of scientific bureau) and Jaap de Bruijn (campaign manager) of the Dutch green party "Green Left".

No presentation

Party systems in transition: new dimensions: 12-11-2014

Aarts, K. and Thomassen, J. (2008) 'Dutch Voters and the Changing Party Space 1989–2006', *Acta Politica* 43: 203-234.

Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschie, S. and Frey, T. (2006) 'Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared', *European Journal of Political Research* 45(6): 921-956.

Van der Brug, W. and Van Spanje, J. (2009) 'Immigration, Europe, and the 'new' cultural dimension', *European Journal of Political Research* 48(3): 309-334.

Presentation: Finland

Party systems in transition: new contenders: 19-11-2014

Bordignon, F. and Ceccarini, L. (2013) 'Five Stars and a Cricket. Beppe Grillo Shakes Italian Politics', *South European Society and Politics* 18(4): 427-449

Lucardie, P. (2000) 'Emergence of New Parties Prophets, Purifiers and Prolocutors, Towards a Theory on the Emergence of New Parties', *Party Politics* 6(2): 175-185.

Mudde, C. (2004) 'The populist Zeitgeist', *Government and Opposition* 39: 541-563.

Rydgren, J. (2004) 'Explaining the Emergence of Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties: The Case of Denmark', *West European Politics* 27(3): 474-502.

Presentation: Ireland

Party systems in transition: established parties under distress?: 26-11-2014

Bale, T., Green-Pedersen, C., Krouwel, A., Luther, K. R. and Sitter, N. (2010) 'If You Can't Beat Them, Join Them? Explaining Social Democratic Responses to the Challenge from the Populist Radical Right in Western Europe', *Political Studies* 58(3): 410-426.

Duncan, F. (2006) 'A Decade of Christian Democratic Decline: The Dilemmas of the CDU, ÖVP and CDA in the 1990s', *Government and Opposition* 41: 469-90.

Meguid, B. M. (2005) 'Competition Between Unequals: The role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success', *The American Political Science Review* 99(3): 347-359.

Rooduijn, M., De Lange, S. and Van der Brug, W. (2014) 'A populist Zeitgeist? Programmatic contagion by populist parties in Western Europe', *Party Politics* 20(2): 563-575.

Guest lecture by: Matthijs Rooduijn

Presentation: Spain

New government formulas: 03-12-2014

De Lange, Sarah L. (2012) 'New alliances: Why mainstream parties govern with radical right-wing populist parties', *Political Studies* 60(4): 899-918.

Dumont, P. and Bäck, H. (2006) 'Why so few and why so late? Green parties and the question of governmental participation', *European Journal of Political Research* 45: S35-S67.

Dunphy, H. and Bale, T. (2011) 'The radical left in coalition government: Towards a comparative measurement of success and failure', *Party Politics* 17(4): 488-504

Heinisch, R. (2003) 'Success in opposition – failure in government: explaining the performance of right-wing populist parties in public office', *West European Politics* 26(3): 91-130

Guest lecture by: Sarah de Lange

Presentation: Sweden

Elections, leaders and final thoughts on role of parties in representative democracies: 10-12-2014

Deschouwer, K. (1996) 'Political Parties and Democracy: A Mutual Murder', *European Journal of Political Research* 29(3): 263-278.

Farrell, D. M. and P. Webb (2000) 'Political Parties as Campaign Organizations', in: Dalton R.J. en M. Wattenberg (red.) *Parties without Partisans*, pp. 102-128.

Kriesi, H.P. (2011) 'Personalization of national election campaigns', *Party Politics* 17(1): 1-20.

Van der Pas, D. (2014) 'To whom do leaders matter? Characteristics of individual voters that moderate

leadership effects', Unpublished manuscript: **AVAILABLE FROM BLACKBOARD.**

Guest lecture by: Daphne van der Pas

Presentation: Austria