

Course description
BAWC
Political parties in 21st century Europe
2015-2016

Bachelor Course (12 ECT)
Political Parties in 21st Century Europe
Semester 2 2015-2016
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.
- Learned where to find and how to analyze descriptive data on political parties and party systems.

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 even that they have become so-called “cartel parties”; yet, at the same time, the parties challenging the status-quo are often 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 what explains the number of parties in a party system, why are parties founded 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 and empirical journal articles and book chapters. We will read some of the classics (e.g., Downs, Sartori and 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 in-class case studies we will examine to what extent the literature that we have studied can help explain the behavior of real parties like the Danish People's Party, the Dutch Christian Democrats, Podemos in Spain and the Italian Five Star Movement. Moreover, each lecture will start with a student presentation on a European party system. As such, students will acquire a lot of new knowledge on foreign party systems, and also learn to link the course literature to what is currently going on in European politics. Finally, 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 10 am - 1 pm REC B1.01

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' preparation for the weekly meetings and for 50% on the final essay. The "preparation grade" is based on two components: a) the quality of the portfolio of discussion questions, political cartoons and columns (30%, see A for requirements) and b) the quality of the presentation held by the student (20%, see B 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 C.

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

Final grade = Quality of portfolio (30%) + Quality of presentation (20%) + Final paper (50%).

In order to pass this course there are **2 minimum requirements**: a) students must attend at least 12 of the 14 weekly meetings, b) students must deliver a presentation (see B).

In case the final grade is below 5.50, **only the final paper may be resubmitted before Friday June 3th 5 pm**. This second chance **only applies to students that have met the 2 minimum requirements** above. The **maximum grade for the final paper will be a 6** (out of 10).

- A) **Each Tuesday before 2 pm** (with the exception of February 2th) students need to e-mail their discussion questions/political cartoons/opinion columns to the course instructor. **A discussion question** should deal with the course literature on the agenda for that week. For instance, the student could point to an argument that s/he finds unconvincing and wishes to discuss during class, or s/he may introduce a topic or proposition for further discussion (e.g. the normative implications of particular empirical finding or how theories relate to the everyday practice of our contemporary party systems). The discussion question should be clearly introduced and motivated (1 A4). **A political cartoon** should also refer to the course literature of that week. Besides inserting the cartoon in a word document, the student should clarify on approximately ½ A4 how the cartoon relates to the course literature of that week. Students will have to look for cartoons in extant sources (e.g. newspapers or opinion magazines) and draw their own cartoon. Last, in the **opinion column** (1 A4), the student discusses an ongoing societal debate in any country of the world that relates to the course literature of that week. S/he also reveals his/her informed position in that debate. On April 6th there will be two guest lectures. **In that week a discussion question should be prepared for each guest lecturer**. What would you like to know about their work? I will send them your questions in advance, so they can optimally prepare themselves. In toto, students should submit **5 discussion questions, 3 cartoons from existing sources, 1 cartoon drawn by themselves, 2 columns, and the questions prepared for the guest speakers**. All these individual items will be graded and included in the student's portfolio. The average over all items in the portfolio counts for 30% of the final grade. For each missing item, the portfolio grade will be reduced by one point. Items can only be included in the portfolio if they are handed in on time. It is up to the student to decide in which week s/he will opt for which mode of preparation, as long as the final portfolio is structured as outlined above. Thus, if, for instance, you find it difficult to link the course literature to a cartoon, you can always opt for a discussion question or column. Some of the students' discussion questions, columns and cartoons will be further discussed during class.

- B) Each student (some in pairs) will give a presentation of approximately 20 minutes about a party system of which s/he is not a national. 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. The presentation should therefore apply the course literature of that week to the party system that is on the agenda for that week. To give an example: Sartori (1990) distinguishes between different types of party systems (e.g. polarized pluralism, moderate pluralism, etc.). Hence, a possible topic for a presentation would be to classify the Dutch party system according to this typology. The presentation should also discuss to what extent the course literature helped us to understand contemporary politics in the party system at hand. If possible, the student should clarify his/her opinion with empirical data. Relevant information can be found in the ParlGov database (<http://www.parlgov.org/>) and political country yearbooks (<http://www.politicaldatayearbook.com/>). It is also strongly encouraged to consult additional academic literature. A presentation schedule will be drafted during the first meeting. At least 24 hours before the presentation, the Power-Point slides should be send to the instructor. In case of doubt how the course literature should be applied to a particular case, students may always consult the instructor.
- C) On **Friday 20-05 before 5 pm** students will hand in a final essay **in hard-copy and through Blackboard Ephorus**. This essay (7000 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 requirements**: a) in-text citations and a reference list must be provided, b) sufficient care to grammar and spelling, 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 April 13th** 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). Note that the regulations governing fraud and plagiarism apply to all students of the UvA. It is therefore important to know which academic rules you must follow (<http://student.uva.nl/en/az/content/plagiarism-and-fraud/plagiarism-and-fraud.html>).

Course program by week (tentative since guest speakers have not yet con-

firmed!

1. Introduction to party systems: 03-02-2016

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

No presentation

2. Changing lines of conflict: 10-02-2016

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. [Available from blackboard]

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

Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, 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.

Presentation: Belgium

3. Changing ways of thinking about political parties: 17-02-2016

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.**

Presentation: Denmark

4. Number of parties, party birth & party death: 24-02-2016

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: France

5. Changing modes of party competition: 02-03-2016

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.

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 [Available from blackboard]

Presentation: UK

6. Party goals and party platform change: 09-03-2016

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): 259-287.

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

Presentation: Ireland

7. Guest lecture: 16-03-2016

Guest lecturer still to be announced

No presentation

8. Changing voter motivations and electoral volatility: 30-03-2016

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

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. [Available from blackboard]

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

Presentation: Switzerland

9. Guest lectures: 06-04-2016

Guest lecturers still to be announced

No presentation

10. Politicization of new issues 13-04-2016

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

Green-Pedersen, Christoffer. 2007. "The Conflict of Conflicts in Comparative Perspective. Euthanasia as a Political Issue in Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands." *Comparative Politics* 39 (3): 273-291.

Van der Eijk & Franklin, H2, pp. 32-49 [Available from blackboard]

Presentation: Germany

11. New challengers: 20-04-2016

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.

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

Presentation: Italy

12. Established parties under distress? 04-05-2016

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.

Presentation: Spain

13. New government formulas 11-05-2016

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

Presentation: Sweden

14. Final meeting: 18-05-2016

Course literature to be decided by the students

Presentation: Poland