

## Public Policy and Party Politics

### Dates and Time of the Course

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Session I	January 15, 9-12:40, O226
Session II	January 29, 9-12:40, O226
Session III	February 19, 9-12:40, O226
Session IV	February 26, 9-12:40, O226
Session V	March 11, 9-12:40, O226
Session VI	March 25, 9-12:40, O226

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## INTRODUCTION

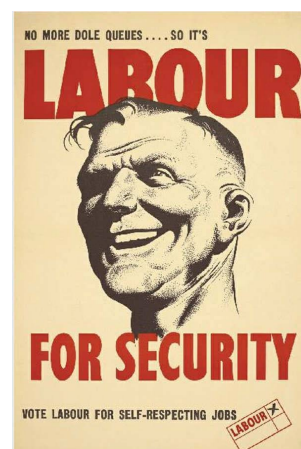
The aim of this course is to link public policies and policy-making processes to party politics. The course takes a comparative angle and will look at how party politics and party preferences interfere with public-policymaking and how diverging political ideologies influence and shape public policies. During the seminar, we will discuss whether and why governments indeed respond differently to essentially similar policy problems and current (economic) challenges (e.g. unemployment, financial crisis, globalization, immigration, etc.). We will also look into how and whether the relationship between party politics and policies has evolved and changed over time and assess the question whether the great recession has led to a new style in policy-making and governance.

The course draws on a large literature situated at the intersection between party politics, political economy and comparative politics and aims at integrating popular readings and ‘real world’ examples. In addition to discussing the theoretical linkages between political parties and policies, we will also look into how scholarly research has operationalized this nexus and how attempts to measure policy positions and party ideology have evolved over time.

While the seminar is rooted in a vibrant scholarly field, I expect participants to familiarize themselves with various primary sources illustrating political discourses over public policies (ranging from newspapers, to parliamentary debates, public opinion polls, party statements, statements by influential vested interest groups etc.). Engaging with these materials should not only help participants to link scholarly contributions with ‘real world’ examples but also prepare you to work on take home assignments, papers and presentations.

In the final paper, you are asked to examine the policy-making process in the light of a specific argument/theoretical approach, by i.e. highlighting how and at what stages of the policy process party ideology has a significant impact or how public discourse may affect the design and outcome of a legislative project.

This exercise will illustrate how political institutions, third party actors (such as interest and lobbying groups) affect public policies. By doing this, you will also get familiar with primary sources such as policy proposals, parliamentary minutes and other sources of information that can be used to analyze public policies. By the end of the course students you will be familiar with the core literature on party politics and public policy and have an understanding of how to analyze and trace public policymaking in empirical research.



## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Have a critical understanding of core political science theories relating to partisanship and median voter
- Have a well developed knowledge of the empirical literature that has applied and tested these theories
- Know sources of information on policy-making processes and legislative decision-making.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Before each session, you're required to submit two questions, observations or comments that are related to the required readings. These questions will help the student who is in charge of the discussion to structure it and highlight key issues.

You are expected to attend each seminar and participate in discussions. Participation is graded as follows: attendance (but no participation) will merit a C+; good faith efforts at participation will get you into the B/B+ range; valuable contributions will get you into the B+/A range. For each session, you are required to come prepared with a critical understanding of the mandatory readings. I have kept reading to a minimum in order to have an in-depth discussion of the subject during the seminar. The further readings are indicative of additional useful literature for essays or presentations but you should go beyond this list and find additional relevant sources in case you opt to write your essay on a particular approach/topic.

It is highly recommended to also collect material and policy documents, manifestoes etc. from the parties, etc. you're most familiar with. The aim is to incorporate such documents into class exercises and group work.

In one session, you will be responsible to **organize and lead the discussion** on one of the topics. The discussion can start off with a short summary of the reading mentioning its key take away points/arguments and is then followed by critical observations/remarks you have which are related to the overall topic or the reading. In addition, you can make use of the questions (on the readings) submitted by your peers to structure and trigger the debate. Furthermore, you are encouraged to link the topic to current developments and events in party politics and policy-making.

The short **position/response papers** can be submitted throughout the term. Papers are due on Monday before class (in the fall term, this may change for the winter term). When you submit a response paper for a given session, you are expected to be particularly active in the discussion that week. You should be prepared to talk about the views you expressed in the paper and discuss them with your class mates. The length of each position paper/comparison should not exceed 1.500 words.

The **final paper**, which should not exceed 3.000 words, critically examines a policy-making process in the light of a **specific argument/theoretical approach** that has been discussed during the seminar. For example, you could assess how and at what stages of the policy process party ideology has a significant impact, how public discourse may affect the design and outcome of a legislative project, or how the position of a political party on a specific issue has changed over time. The precise substantive requirements will be discussed in class. For the final paper, I expect you to work with original sources (party manifestos, policy documents such as legislative proposals, parliamentary minutes, expert surveys, etc.)

The final grade consists of the following components:

- Preparation of in-class discussion based on core readings and questions submitted by peers (20%)
- Position paper (30%)
- Final paper: (50%)

## SOURCES

Political Science Data on Parties, Governments, Elections, Policies

- Website of the Comparative Manifesto Project <https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/>
- Parliament and Government Composition Data base <http://parlgov.org/>
- Policy Agendas Project <http://www.policyagendas.org/>
- Comparative Agendas Project <http://www.comparativeagendas.org/>
- Chapel Hill Survey <http://www.chesdata.eu/>

Legislative Processes, Parliamentary Minutes :

- UK House of Commons <http://www.parliament.uk/business/bills-and-legislation/>
- US Congress <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/issues/bills/>
- German Parliament <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21.web/bt>
- Website of your own national parliament, media outlets, LexisNexis Academic

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

		<i>Topics</i>
<i>Session</i> ( <i>January</i> 15)	<i>I</i>	Introduction: how is public policy related to party politics? What are the mechanisms of public policy-making in representative democracies? What are political parties?
<i>Session</i> ( <i>January</i> 29)	<i>II</i>	Measuring Partisanship and Party's Policy Preferences: Party Manifesto and Expert Surveys. What are pro's and con's of these sources? How are they used in the literature? How can you work with them?
<i>Session</i> ( <i>February</i> 19)	<i>III</i>	Policy Positions and Party Preferences over Time? How do parties shift their position over time? What makes parties move? Is there convergence, or rather divergence? How do new parties in the system affect established parties and their policy stances?
<i>Session</i> ( <i>February</i> 26)	<i>IV</i>	Parties, Policies, and Public Opinion: What are the causal links? Does public opinion drive party politics or the other way around?
<i>Session</i> ( <i>March</i> 11)	<i>V</i>	Populism and Party Politics. Is there such a thing like populist public policies? Are populist policies linked to specific political parties? Are all populist extremist parties?
<i>Session</i> ( <i>March</i> 25)	<i>VI</i>	Is There Still Room for Party Politics in Public Policy-Making? What about public policy without party politics?

**DETAILED COURSE PLAN (REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED READINGS)**

The syllabus will be amended with further popular readings

**Session****Topic and Readings**

Session I

**Introduction: How is Public Policy Related to Party Politics?**

During this session we will discuss the underlying assumptions of the traditional partisan hypothesis, look into the nature of political parties (what are the functions of political parties in politics and what distinguishes them from other (political) actors.

*Required Readings*

- Public Policy and Political Parties: ?
- Political Parties and Macroeconomic Policy: ?
- The Principles of Representative Government ?, Chapter 6
- Political Parties and Democracy: ?

*Popular Readings:*

- Why politics is stuck in the middle (NYT, February 2010)
- A Republican Tax Plan Built for Plutocrats (Financial Times, November 2017)
- Is there a crisis? (The Economist, July 1999)
- Empty vessels (The Economist, July 1999)
- Politics as warfare (The Economist, November 2003)

*Recommended Readings*

- Does Representative Government Make a Difference?: ?, Chapter 13
- Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Democratic Politics: ?
- Party Government and its Alternatives: ?
- The Rise of Parties in Western Democracies: ?
- Ideological Congruence between Party Rhetoric and Policy-Making: ?

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**Session**

Session II

**Topic and Readings**

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**Measuring Partisanship and Party Ideology**

In this session we are looking into different ways how partisanship can be measured and how these measures have evolved and developed over time. We'll also discuss the pro's and con's of the various measures and critically evaluate the meaningfulness of the most commonly used dimension of political competition (left-right axis).

*Required Readings*

- Strengths and Weaknesses of Approaches to Measuring Policy Positions of Parties: ?
- The Party Mandate and the Westminster Model: ?
- Some Expert Judgements ?

*Recommended Readings*

- Revisiting Expert Judgments: ?
- Mapping Policy Preferences: ?
- Estimating Policy Positions from Political Texts: ?
- Extracting Policy Positions from Political Texts Using Words as Data: ?
- Experts and Manifestos: Different Sources – Same Results: ?
- Measuring Party Positions in Europe: The Chapel Hill Expert Survey Trend File: ?
- Beyond Salience and Position Taking: How Political Parties Communicate through their Manifestos: ?

*Popular Readings:*

- The unprecedented partisanship of congress (Washington Post, 2016), <https://goo.gl/hryP8G>
  - What the Far Left and Right Have in Common, in Germany and Elsewhere (The Economist, August 2018)
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**Session**

Session III

**Topic and Readings****Policy Positions and Party Preferences over Time**

Do parties shift their positions over time? Is there convergence or rather divergence in the way parties position themselves in the political space? A large literature tries to understand how political parties react to the ever increasing constraints they are exposed to while trying to shape policies and influence them according to their ideology and preferences. In this session we will assess different theories that aim at explaining how and why political parties change their positions.

*Required Readings*

- Multidimensionality of Party Competition: ?
- Niche Party Success and Mainstream Party Policy Shifts – Howe Green and Radical Parties Differ in their Impact: ?
- Principles vs. Pragmatism: Policy Shifts and Political Competition: ?
- Newness as A Winning Formula for New Political Parties: ?
- Economy, Corruption or Floating Voters? Explaining the Breakthroughs of Anti-Establishment Reform Parties in Eastern Europe: ?
- A Growing Impact of New Parties? Myth or Reality?: ?

*Popular Reading*

- Displaced, defeated and not so sure what to do next (The Economist, January 1999)
- Ideology, Beyond Left and Right (Economist, 1998)
- Greening the globe (The Economist, April 2001)
- The Future of the Left (NYT): <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/03/opinion/future-american-left.html>
- The Future of the Left in Europe <http://prospect.org/article/future-left-europe>
- What happened to Europe's Left? (EUROPP Blog LSE)

*Recommended Readings*

- Restructuration of Partisan Politics: ??
- Random Walk or Planned Excursion? ?
- Moderate Now, Win Votes Later: The Electoral Consequences of Parties' Policy Shifts: ?
- Why Do Political Parties Change their Policy Positions? A Review: ?
- It Sounds Like They Are Moving: Understanding and Modeling Emphasis-Based Policy Change: ?

**Session**

Session IV

**Topic and Readings****Parties, Policies and Public Opinion: What are the Causal Links?**

In this session we will discuss how public opinion, political parties and policies are linked. We will particularly look into whether new parties give rise to a different set of policies focusing on environmentalist parties and so-called populist parties. In addition, we assess how and whether the public mood conditions parties and/or policies.

*Required Readings*

- The Public as Thermostat: ?
- Public Opinion and the Reform of the Pension Systems in Europe: The Influence of Solidarity Principle: ?
- Responding to Voters or Responding to Markets? Political Parties and Public Opinion in an Era of Globalization: ?
- Responsive Government? Public Opinion and Government Policy Preferences in Britain and Denmark: ?
- Public Opinion, Institutions and Welfare State Change: ?

*Popular Readings*

- Policymaker are ignoring us, but no more than usual ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/27/policymakers-are-ignoring-us-but-no-more-than-usual/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.09c2c25f3f09](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/27/policymakers-are-ignoring-us-but-no-more-than-usual/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.09c2c25f3f09))
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*Recommended Readings*

- Social Policy Responsiveness in Developed Democracies: ?
- Inequality, Public Opinion and Redistribution: ?
- Opinion-Policy Dynamics: Public Preferences and Public Expenditure in the United Kingdom: ?
- Public Opinion and Government Policy in Britain, A Case of Convergence: ?

**Session**

Session V

**Topic and Readings****Populist Parties, Populist Public Policies?**

The political discourse in many countries, East and West is polarized and increasingly dominated by populist actors and groups. While there is an increasing consensus how to define populist actors and parties, the question how to identify and classify populist policies receives less attention. This session aims at assessing the characteristics of populist public policies and discuss to what extent they entered the government agenda and in which policy fields.

*Required Readings*

- Studying Populism in Comparative Perspective: ?
- Choosing Whom to Betray: Populist Right-Wing Parties, Welfare State Reforms and the Trade Off between Office and Vote: ?
- How Populist Are the People? Measuring Populist Attitudes in Voters: ?

*Popular Readings*

- How Trump's 'populist' economic policies hides a payday for the wealthy (The Guardian, August 2016)
- Populism and the Politics of Health (NYT, March 2017)
- Populism and Time Inconsistency (VOX, Cepr's Policy Portal)
- Populist Economic Policy and How to Respond to It (Euractive November 2017)
- The Power of Populists (The Economist, July 2017)
- Fascism resurgent (The Economist, October 1999)

*Recommended Readings*

- If you Can't Beat them Join them?: ?
- Is Extreme Right-Wing Populism Contagious? Explaining the Emergence of a New Party Family: ?
- The Radical Right in the Alps: ?
- Do Mainstream Parties Adapt to the Welfare Chauvinism of Populist Parties? ?
- Populism and the Economics of Globalization: ?
- Success in Opposition – Failure in Government: ?



**Session**

Session VI

**Topic and Readings****Still Room for Politics in Public Policy-making?**

To what extent are parties in government still able to shape public policies? Are we moving towards a world of (global) public policy without party politics? What is the role of parties in government and political parties in general in an interdependent and globalised world?

*Required Readings*

- Party Government: The Challenge to Party Governments: ?
- Parties Response to Globalization: ?

*Popular Readings*

- Das Ende der Demokratie wie wir sie kennen (Spiegel Online, Februar 2016)
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*Recommended Readings*

- Democracy Beyond Parties: ?
- The Political Economy of Fiscal Consolidation Revisited: ?
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