



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2018

8,384: The Politics of Electoral Systems: Political Conflict and Representation

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

Decentral - examination paper written at home with presentation (individual) (100%)

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[8,384,1.00 The Politics of Electoral Systems: Political Conflict and Representation](#) -- Englisch -- [Walter André](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

All assigned readings in the course employ quantitative methods. Therefore, a basic understanding of statistics and probability is helpful.

Course content

Electoral systems have increasingly received attention during the last years. Most recently, the election of Donald Trump, despite losing the popular vote, has created considerable debate about the representativeness of the US electoral system. In Austria, the social democratic and the conservative parties have repeatedly proposed to introduce majoritarian rule. In contrast, the electoral systems of Zug, Schwyz and Nidwalden have been declared unconstitutional by the Swiss federal court, which has led to the adoption of biproportional apportionment. However, similar problems also occur outside the Europe and the US. For instance, Lebanon's last election dates back to 2009. Even though MPs are elected on a four-year basis, new elections have been delayed because Lebanese parties failed to agree on a new electoral law. The examples show that the questions of electoral systems choice and political representation are of great importance. However, why do have countries different electoral systems? Why do debates about electoral systems center around the representation of minority groups in some countries while other countries prefer majority representation? What political and social consequences are linked to different electoral systems? The course is designed to introduce students to the comparative electoral systems literature. By reviewing the current literature, we address topics such as the origins of electoral systems, how electoral systems incentivize strategic voting and affect party system fragmentation and cohesion, the voting behavior of members of parliament, redistribution, corruption, and political participation. In every session, multiple papers with different, sometimes opposing views are discussed. Participants learn to critically evaluate different studies based on the stringency of the argumentation and methodological rigor. In addition, students will gain a better understanding of different research designs to study political phenomena by discussing micro and macro approaches, experimental designs, concept formation, and measurement issues. After participation in the course, students are able to engage critically and informed in debates about electoral systems.

Course structure

The course comprises 11 sessions.

Students are expected to attend each class session and participate fully in class discussions. Readings must be completed prior to each class. All readings will be provided on StudyNet.

Course literature



Cox, Gary W. *Making votes count: strategic coordination in the world's electoral systems*. Political economy of institutions and decisions. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Norris, Pippa. *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behavior*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Additional course information

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Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/1)

Examination time and form

Decentral - examination paper written at home with presentation (individual) (100%)

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Term papers

- Term papers must be written without anyone else's help and in accordance with the known quotation standards, and they must contain a declaration of authorship.
- The documentation of sources (quotations, bibliography) has to be done throughout and consistently in accordance with the APA or MLA standards. The indications of the sources of information taken over verbatim or in paraphrase (quotations) must be integrated into the text in accordance with the precepts of the applicable quotation standard, while informative and bibliographical notes must be added as footnotes (recommendations and standards can be found, for example, in METZGER, C. (2015), *Lern- und Arbeitsstrategien* (11th ed., 4th printing). Aarau: Sauerländer).
- For any work written at the HSG, the indication of the page numbers both according to the MLA and the APA standard is never optional.
- Where there are no page numbers in sources, precise references must be provided in a different way: titles of chapters or sections, section numbers, acts, scenes, verses, etc.
- For papers in law, the legal standard is recommended (by way of example, cf. FORSTMOSER, P., OGOREK R. et SCHINDLER B. (2014, *Juristisches Arbeiten: Eine Anleitung für Studierende* (5. Auflage), Zürich: Schulthess, or the recommendations of the Law School).

Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Examination content

Examination Time and Form

One presentation (25%) Three term papers (each 25%)

Remarks



Participants are required to write three 5-page term papers individually. The seminar consists of three blocks, focusing on different aspects of electoral systems. Participants have to choose one topic of every block. For every paper, the literature is summarized (max. 50% of the paper) and followed by a critical discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing research. The papers should be based on the literature outlined in the syllabus. Optionally, additional literature can be consulted.

Examination relevant literature

The relevant literature will be provided on StudyNet (as of May 16, 2018).

Please note

We would like to point out to you that this fact sheet has absolute priority over other information such as StudyNet, faculty members' personal databases, information provided in lectures, etc.

When will the fact sheets become binding?

- Information about courses and examination time (central/decentral and grading form): from the start of the bidding process on 25 January 2018
- Information about decentral examinations (examination-aid rule, examination content, examination relevant literature): after the 4th semester week on 19 March 2018
- Information about central examinations (examination-aid rule, examination content, examination relevant literature): from the start of the enrolment period for the examinations on 09 April 2018

Please look at the fact sheet once more after these deadlines have expired.