



Universität zu Köln

Governments and Parliaments: Political Representation in Europe

Summer Semester 2023

Wednesday, 12:00 - 15:30 (IBW, Seminarraum S103)

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Office hours: [Make appointment online](#)

Office: IBW, 3.45

1. Course Description

This seminar focuses on political representation and policy-making in representative democracies by investigating the role of political parties in government and parliament. The course consists of two parts. In the first part, we survey and discuss the literature, while the second part introduces an applied introduction to text-as-data methods in R for the study of political representation using legislative speeches. Questions that the course will address include: How do multiparty governments confront the challenges of joint policymaking? Why can minority governments be effective law-makers? When do opposition parties support governments? Do parliamentary speeches reflect political polarization and voter priorities? How do voters evaluate coalition governments? The sessions will consist of a mixture of theoretical grounding in the substantive literature and text analysis approaches and hands-on analysis of political speeches using the R package *Quanteda*.

2. Course Objectives

- Develop capacity to understand and critically reflect on the main debates related to the study of governments and parliaments
- Learn how to use R and *Quanteda* to analyze political texts and present the results appropriately
- Develop oral presentation skills
- Learn how to write an empirical research paper

3. Prerequisites

This is an advanced seminar. Students must have completed the MA course in quantitative methods (or equivalent). Basic experience with R is expected. This is not an introductory seminar to R. All methods in this course will be implemented in R, using the R package *Quanteda*. In general, it is expected that students possess background knowledge at the level of the following textbook: De Vries, Hobolt, Proksch, Slapin. 2021. *Foundations of European Politics: A Comparative Approach*, Oxford University Press. The book is accessible electronically through the Politics Trove subscription of the university library.

4. Course Requirements

This module follows the portfolio model of examination, meaning you will complete several assignments. You need to submit ALL assignments in order to receive a passing grade:

- Oral presentation of a group text analysis project, presentation on June 14, 30% of grade
- An oral presentation of one of the assigned articles as well as 2-page response paper on the article (to be handed in one week after the respective session), 10% of grade
- An individual presentation of your own research project, including a written 1-page writeup of your proposal (write up due June 21, presentation June 28), 10% of grade
- An empirical research paper (due August 1), max. 10 pages, 50% of grade

5. Course Material

Readings will be available as electronic articles through Ilias.

6. Course Outline

Week 1 **Introduction to the Study of Governments and Parliaments** April 5

Readings:

- Andeweg, Rudy and Tom Lourwense. 2020. “The Institutional Framework of Representative Democracy: Comparing the Populist-Majoritarian and the Liberal/Consensual Model” *Oxford Handbook*
- Wolkenstein, Fabio and Christopher Wratil. 2020. “Multidimensional Representation.” *American Journal of Political Science*
- Benoit, Ken. 2020. “Text as Data: An Overview”. *Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations*. Ed. by L. Curini and R. Franzese. Thousand Oaks: Sage: 461–497.
- Jonathan B. Slapin and Sven-Oliver Proksch. 2014. “Words as Data: Content Analysis in Legislative Studies”, In S. Martin, T. Saalfeld, and K. Strom (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies*. OUP.
- Getting started with the [Quanteda R package](#)

Text Analysis Lab 1:

Introduction to Quanteda, corpus, keywords in context, term-document matrices, basic dictionary analysis (install R, RStudio, Quanteda, Latex)

Week 2 **Coalition Governments and Policy-Making** April 19

Readings:

- Thomson, Robert, et al. 2017. “The fulfillment of parties’ election pledges: A comparative study on the impact of power sharing.” *American Journal of Political Science* 61(3), 527-542.
- Fortunato, David. 2019. “Legislative Review and Party Differentiation in Coalition Governments.” *American Political Science Review*, 113(1), 242-247.
- Klüver, Heike and Hannah Bäck. 2019. “Coalition Agreements, Issue Attention, and Cabinet Governance.” *Comparative Political Studies*. 52(13-14),1995-2031.
- Müller, Stefan. 2020. “Media Coverage of Campaign Promises Throughout the Electoral Cycle”. *Political Communication* 37 (5): 696–718.

Text Analysis Lab 2:

Text complexity, similarity measures, sentiment analysis

Week 3 **Government-Opposition Dynamics in Parliament**

May 3

Readings:

- Proksch, Sven-Oliver, Will Lowe, Jens Wäckerle, and Stuart N. Soroka. 2019. “Multilingual Sentiment Analysis: A New Approach to Measuring Conflict in Legislative Speeches.” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 44 (1), 97-131
- Osnabrügge, Moritz, Sara Hobolt, and Toni Rodon. 2021. “Playing to the Gallery: Emotive Rhetoric in Parliaments.” *American Political Science Review*, 115(3), 885-899.
- Valentim, Vincente and Tobias Widmann. 2021. “Does Radical-Right Success Make the Political Debate More Negative? Evidence from Emotional Rhetoric in German State Parliaments.” *Political Behavior*
- Rauh, Christian and Pieter De Wilde. 2018. “The opposition deficit in EU accountability: Evidence from over 20 years of plenary debate in four member states.” *European Journal of Political Research*, 57: 194-216.

Text Analysis Lab 3:

Supervised machine learning

Week 4 **Party Positioning in Parliament**

May 10

Readings:

- Proksch, Sven-Oliver and Jonathan B. Slapin. 2015. *Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-2.
- Slapin, Jonathan B. and Sven-Oliver Proksch. 2008. “A Scaling Model For Estimating Time-Series Policy Positions from Texts.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52(3), 705-722.
- Michael, Laver, Kenneth Benoit, and John Garry. 2003. “Extracting policy positions from political texts using words as data.” *American Political Science Review* 97(2): 311-331.
- Herzog, Alexander and Kenneth Benoit. 2015. “The Most Unkindest Cuts: Speaker Selection and Expressed Government Dissent During Economic Crisis.” *The Journal of Politics* 77 (4): 1157–1175.

Text Analysis Lab 4:

Text scaling

Week 5 **The Role of Public Opinion and Voter Evaluations**

May 17

Readings:

- Pickup, Mark and Sara Hobolt. 2015. “The conditionality of the trade-off between government responsiveness and effectiveness: The impact of minority status and polls in the Canadian House of Commons.” *Electoral Studies* 40: 517-530.
- Klüver, Heike and Jae-Jae Spoon. 2016. “Who Responds? Voters, Parties and Issue Attention.” *British Journal of Political Science*, 46(3), 633-654.
- Pereira, Miguel. 2021. “Understanding and Reducing Biases in Elite Beliefs About the Electorate.” *American Political Science Review* 115(4), 1308-1324.
- Wratil, Christopher, Jens Wäckerle, and Sven-Oliver Proksch. 2022. “Government Rhetoric and the Representation of Public Opinion in International Negotiations” *American Political Science Review*
- Fortunato, David. 2019. “The electoral implications of coalition policy making.” *British Journal of Political Science*, 49(1), 59-80.

Text Analysis Lab 5:

Topic models

Week 6 **Group Project Office Hours**

June 7 (Office Hours per Zoom)

Week 7 **Group Project Presentations**

June 14

Week 8 **Final Paper Idea Presentations**

June 28
