Course Outline

Parliaments are a fundamental component of democratic systems. Nevertheless, some of these institutions differ considerably between countries and over time. These differences and their consequences for the political system in a country are the focus of this seminar.

The aim of this course is to give the participants an insight into some basic features and fundamental questions of political science in the field of legislative politics. One focus is on the theoretical foundations of legislative politics: In the first block of the seminar, we address relevant actors, namely parties, governments and the opposition. We then turn to relevant processes in and around parliament. In addition to party competition, we will discuss the process of policy-making and the analysis of speeches in parliaments. In a final part, we will then turn to more specific fields of parliamentary research, looking at the representation of different groups in parliament, as well as the communication and use of social media by parliamentarians.

A second focus is on getting to know relevant data sets in parliamentary research and simple ways of analysing them. This will enable us to check some of the questions and relationships that we have discussed theoretically before. In addition, this should enable you to start developing your own ideas and questions, which you can use in later papers and theses.

Prerequisites: The seminar is designed for the Bachelor’s programme in Social Sciences (Sozialwissenschaften). In general, no specific prior knowledge is required. Since the seminar is held in English, participants should be able to understand and articulate themselves in English as this will be the general classroom language. Of course, perfection is not required but you should be able to make yourself understood. A previous knowledge of data analysis and statistics can be helpful, but is not a prerequisite.
Assignments and Grading:

- Term paper (70%), Presentation (30%).

- Each participant should prepare and present one of the core readings as a presentation of approximately 15 minutes. The topics/papers will be distributed within the first two weeks of classes. Presentation slides have to be sent to the instructors via email a day before the presentation. The slides can also be shared with other participants via ILIAS but it is not a must.

- At the end of the semester, each student is to submit a term paper of 10-12 pages. The paper should critically review one of the compulsory readings. Simple re-telling of a paper is not considered a critical review. The paper should be analyzed against the context of the seminar topic at large and critically discussed. Further research is encouraged but not needed. The term paper and presentation can be on the same topic but do not have to be. When doing both on the same topic, we expect that the term paper is not an exact copy of the presentation but rather a further development and analysis of a given topic. More detailed information will be given throughout the course.

- Bonus points: Bonus points can be achieved by sending in discussion questions before the seminar. These must be sent to us by mail by Wednesday evening at the latest. Further details will follow in the first session.

Important Dates:

- Examination registration ............End of the second week of classes
- Term paper topic confirmation ....................01. February 2021
- Submission of the term paper .....................29. February 2021

Class Participation and Plagiarism

- Participation: Students are expected to read the assigned texts as well as actively participate during each session. Bonus points will be distributed for class participation and discussion questions.

- Assignments and plagiarism: The assignments are to be done individually. Plagiarized works are not accepted and will be subject to the university regulations on plagiarism. All assignments will be checked for plagiarism.
Schedule and Literature

Week 1: Introduction to Legislative Studies - November 2nd, 2020

Literature


Additional Literature


Week 2: Parliaments and Parties - November 9th, 2020

Literature


Additional Literature


Week 3: Government and Opposition - November 16th, 2020

Literature


Additional Literature


Week 4: Party Competition and Elections - November 23th, 2020

Literature


Additional Literature


Week 5: Parliamentary Debates and Speech - November 30th, 2020

Literature


Additional Literature


Week 6: Data Session I - December 7th, 2019

Data

- ParlGov
- Party Facts
- ParlSpeech

Week 7: Policy-Making and Agenda-Setting - December 14th, 2019

Literature

Additional Literature


Week 8: Representation- January 4th, 2021

Literature

- Daniel Stockemer. Women’s descriptive representation in developed and developing countries. *International Political Science Review*, 36(4):393–408, 2015

Additional Literature


Week 9: Communication and Social Media - January 11th, 2021

Literature


Additional Literature

- Daniela V Dimitrova and Jörg Matthes. Social media in political campaigning around the world: Theoretical and methodological challenges, 2018


Week 10: Data Session II - January 18th, 2021

Data

- The Comparative Agendas Project
- Social Media Data for the German federal elections 2017

Week 11: Parliaments in Presidential Systems - January 25th, 2021

Literature


Additional Literature


Week 12: Parliaments in Authoritarian Regimes - February 1st, 2020

Literature


Additional Literature


Week 13: Outlook and Concluding Discussion- February 8th, 2020

Additional Literature

References


Daniela V Dimitrova and Jörg Matthes. Social media in political campaigning around the world: Theoretical and methodological challenges, 2018.


