



Universität zu Köln

# Comparing European Democracies

Winter Semester 2018/2019

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Tuesday, 12:00 - 13:30 (Seminargebäude, 106 Seminarraum S11)

**Prof. Sven-Oliver Proksch**

Cologne Center for Comparative Politics (CCCP)

E-mail: [so.proksch@uni-koeln.de](mailto:so.proksch@uni-koeln.de)

Office Hours: Wednesday 13:30-14:30 (by appointment)

Office: Universitätsstrasse 91

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## 1. Course Description

This course introduces students to the comparative study of democracies in Europe. As political decisions in Europe are taken both in national capitals and in Brussels, this course will provide students with analytical frameworks to understand both domestic and supranational politics in Europe. The lecture will present students with a basic toolkit to study advanced democracies (including delegation models, the spatial model of politics, formal reasoning). The goal of the lecture is not to cover a few European countries in depth, nor to survey as many facts as possible about Europe. Instead, the objective is to equip students with analytical tools to understand and examine contemporary developments and political puzzles that are of particular relevance to European democracies and to prepare them for advanced seminars on European politics, political representation, behavior, and institutions.

## 2. Course Objectives

- Become familiar with delegation and strategic models of politics in the study of European democracies
- Acquire in-depth knowledge of the political systems in Europe and the European Union
- Become familiar with different arguments in the study of European democracies, including the European Union

### 3. Prerequisites

A basic knowledge of concepts and methods in political science is required. Students should be able to understand academic papers written in English language. Classroom discussion and the exam will be in English.

### 4. Course Requirements

The final exam will take place on the last day of class. Students are able to receive 60 points on the exam (60 minutes). You need to register for the final exam until **XX January 2019**.

### 5. Debate event: NRW debattiert Europa

This course will participate in the state-wide debate tournament among political science students on Europe: <http://nrwdebattierteuropa.eu/>. This debate will take place in Duisburg on 16 January. The preparation of this debate as well as the selection of the final debate team that our course will send to Duisburg will take place throughout the semester. The participation in this debate event is optional. Students that wish to participate in the debate event need to form a group of five students. Each group needs to indicate the names of the participating students until 31 October to the course teaching assistant. Students that are unable to form a group until then, but that still wish to participate, can submit their names to the course TA until the same deadline and will be added to a group by the TA.

Each group will receive a topic (a claim related to current European politics) as well as the instruction to argue for or against this claim. The group needs to submit a written speech of its arguments of 700-800 words length. In addition, the group needs to identify three potential counterarguments against their own argument and indicate potential responses to those arguments (this second part can be in bullet points, no need to formulate a full speech). This document needs to be submitted on the course website until November 2. The assignment can be submitted in German or English, but should the teams be selected for the next round, speeches need to be held in German. The course instructor and TA will select four teams to participate in the first internal debate round on November 13. On this day, each team that has advanced will select one speaker who will present the prepared statement (there will be no debate between teams, simply the presentation of the speeches). Based on an evaluation by the instructor team and students in the class, two teams will be selected for the formal internal debate. This formal internal debate will take place on 11 December and will follow the format of the official state-wide debate (details will follow). Based on this debate, the winning team for the final debate in January will be selected by a jury.

### 6. Bonus assignment

Students who submit the written assignment (draft speech, three counterarguments and possible responses) for the debate event can receive up to 3 bonus points. An additional 3 bonus points can be received for either being selected for the final debate in Duisburg or physically supporting the debate team there. Bonus points can increase the final grade

of the course, but will only be awarded if students have passed the final exam. Students are able to achieve the highest grade (1,0) without bonus points. Even with bonus points, the final grade cannot be higher than 1,0.

## 7. Course Material

Readings will be available as electronic articles through Ilias.

## 8. Course Outline

### Week 1 **Introduction and Course Overview**

October 9

Readings:

- Clark, Golder and Golder. 2018. *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Chapter 2, What is Science?
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### Week 2 **Modelling Democratic Politics**

October 16

Readings:

- Catherine De Vries, Sara B. Hobolt, Sven-Oliver Proksch, and Jonathan B. Slapin. 2018. "Democratic Politics and Representation". Draft book chapter.
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### Week 3 **National Political Systems**

October 23

Readings:

- Tsebelis, George. 1995. "Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism and Multi-partyism", *British Journal of Political Science* 25: 289-325.
  - Strom, Kaare. 2003. "Parliamentary Democracy and Delegation", in *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies* (eds. Kaare Strom, Wolfgang C. Müller, and Torbjorn Bergman). Oxford University Press, chapter 3
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Week 4 **The Political System of the EU**

October 30

Readings:

- Hix, Simon. 2017. “The EU as a New Political System.” In: Daniele Caramani (ed.) *Comparative Politics*, 4th edn, Oxford University Press.
- Hagemann, Sara, Hobolt, Sara B. and Christopher Wratil. 2017. “Government Responsiveness in the European Union: Evidence From Council Voting,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 50(6), 850-876

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Week 5 **Government Formation and Policy-Making**

November 6

Readings:

- Müller, Wolfgang. 2009. “Government Formation” In *Sage Handbook of Comparative Politics*
- Martin, Lanny W. and Vanberg, Georg. 2014. “Legislative Institutions and Coalition Government.” In *Oxford Handbook for Legislative Studies*
- Klüver, H., and Zubek, R. 2017. “Minority governments and legislative reliability: Evidence from Denmark and Sweden.” *Party Politics*.

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Day 6 **Government in the EU: The Spitzenkandidaten Process**

November 13

*NRW debattiert Europa: In the first half of the class, we will have our pre-debate. Speakers from four teams will be able to present their speeches; we will then have a vote to select the final two teams that will debate on December 11.*

Readings:

- Christiansen, T. 2016. “After the Spitzenkandidaten: fundamental change in the EU’s political system?” *West European Politics*, 39(5), 992-1010.
- Crombez, C., Huysmans, M., and Van Gestel, W. 2017. “Choosing an informative agenda setter: The appointment of the Commission in the European Union.” *European Union Politics*, 18(2), 145-167.

**Day 7 Parliaments and Parties**

November 20

Readings:

- Proksch, Sven-Oliver and Jonathan B. Slapin. 2015. *Politics of Parliamentary Debate: Parties, Rebels, and Representation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-2 and 7.
  - O'Brien, D. Z. 2015. "Rising to the Top: Gender, Political Performance, and Party Leadership in Parliamentary Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science*, 59: 1022–1039.
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**Day 8 Responsibility and Accountability**

November 27

Readings:

- Hobolt, Sara B., and James Tilley. 2014. "Who's in charge? How voters attribute responsibility in the European Union." *Comparative Political Studies* 47.6: 795-819.
  - Fortunato, D., 2017. "The Electoral Implications of Coalition Policy Making." *British Journal of Political Science*, pp.1-22.
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**Day 9 Political Behavior in EP Elections**

December 4

Readings:

- Schmitt, H., Hobolt, S. and Popa, S.A., 2015. "Does personalization increase turnout? Spitzenkandidaten in the 2014 European Parliament elections." *European Union Politics*, 16(3), pp.347-368.
  - De Vries, C.E. and Hobolt, S.B., 2016. "EU Issue voting in national and European Parliamentary elections" In: Van der Brug and De Vreese (eds) *(Un)Intended Consequences of European Parliamentary Elections*, pp. 101-124, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
  - Hobolt, S.B. and Wittrock, J., 2011. "The second-order election model revisited: An experimental test of vote choices in European Parliament elections." *Electoral Studies*, 30(1), pp.29-40.
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Day 10 **NRW debattiert Europa: Pre-Debate**  
December 11

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Day 11 **Party Competition**  
December 18

Readings:

- Bonnie Meguid. 2005. "Competition Between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success." *American Political Science Review*, 99(3): 347-59.
  - Abou-Chadi, T. and Krause, W., 2018. "The Causal Effect of Radical Right Success on Mainstream Parties' Policy Positions: A Regression Discontinuity Approach." *British Journal of Political Science*, pp.1-19..
  - Ward, Dalston, Jeong Hyun Kim, Matthew Graham, and Margit Tavits. 2015. "How Economic Integration Affects Party Issue Emphases", *Comparative Political Studies* 48(10): 1227 - 1259
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Day 12 **Rule of Law and Judicial Politics**  
January 8

Readings:

- Garrett, G., Kelemen, R.D. and Schulz, H., 1998. "The European Court of Justice, national governments, and legal integration in the European Union." *International Organization*, 52(1), 149-176.
  - Slapin, J.B., 2015. "How European Union membership can undermine the rule of law in emerging democracies." *West European Politics*, 38(3), 627-648.
  - Kelemen, R. Daniel. 2017. "Europe's Other Democratic Deficit: National Authoritarianism in Europe's Democratic Union." *Government and Opposition*, 52(2), 211-238.
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Day 13 **NRW debattiert Europa: Final Round in Duisburg**  
No class on January 15. Final debate in Duisburg on January 17.

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Day 14 **Exam Review**  
January 22

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Day 15 **Exam**  
January 29