



UNIVERSITÄT
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Master Seminar

Seminar on Political Economy

Elections, Legislative Behavior and Policy Outcomes

Content

In this seminar we analyze determining factors of voter participation, differences in electoral rules, legislative process, and political institutions. We want to concentrate on how these differences shape incentives of the main political actors and which policy outcome they foster. Thereby, we scientifically discuss topics frequently debated in the media and politics such as low turnout, the allocation of resources, female representation or legislative shirking.

Target Group

This seminar requires a very good understanding of how to read and interpret econometric results and economic models as well as an understanding of general economic principles. Students should be familiar with econometric methods like OLS, Instrumental Variables, Difference-in-Differences or RDD. Master students in Economics, Internationale Wirtschaft & Governance, Development Studies as well as Philosophy & Economics form the target group for this course. The seminar language is English.

Accreditation

Students can earn credit points for the following degree programmes:

- Economics (M.Sc.): “Theorie und Empirie der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung”
- Internationale Wirtschaft und Governance (M.A.): “Theorie und Empirie der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung”
- Philosophy & Economics (M.A.): “Theorie und Empirie der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung”
- Development Studies (M.A.): substitute for A6 after individual consultation. Please contact the lecturer before registering.

Requirements

Seminar participants are asked to write a seminar paper of approximately 6000 words. A seminar paper can either be descriptive and rely on scientific economic literature or it can be based on an own empirical project. Participants can work on one of the topics proposed in the section *Topics for Seminar Papers* or propose an own topic related to the contents of the seminar. Participants peer review the draft of two other seminar participants and provide constructive feedback. Therefore, each participant receives feedback from two other participants which can be implemented in the final seminar paper. Participants give an academic presentation (20 minutes) about their seminar paper. Each participant prepares a discussion (3 minutes) of the seminar paper presented by two other participants. Active participation in discussions during the seminar is expected of all participants and attendance is compulsory. The grade will be given on basis of the seminar presentation, prepared discussion and the written seminar paper.

Seminar Organisation

Lecturer: Marco Frank (Ph.D. student), Volkswirtschaftslehre E, Marco1.Frank@uni-bayreuth.de

The seminar will be held in presence if actual regulations related to the Covid-19 pandemic allow for it. A mandatory **introductory lecture** will take place on the 19th of October 2022 from 17:00-20:00 (room tba). This session serves to present the structure and goals of the seminar and to introduce the topics and requirements for presentations and seminar papers. All potential questions regarding the seminar (e.g. difficulty of topics, presentation style, accreditation etc.) will be answered during the introductory lecture.

The **presentations** will take place on the 20th and 21st of January 2023 (time and room tba). The deadline for the submission of the final **seminar paper** is the 31st of January 2023. The following table summarizes the schedule and important dates:

Date	
October, 19	Introductory lecture
November, 02	Final decision on topic for seminar paper and registration deadline
January, 10	Hand in draft of seminar paper
January, 20 and 21	Presentations
January, 31	Hand in final seminar paper

To register for the seminar (first-come-first-served basis), please fill out the following form until the 17th of October:

<https://forms.gle/d17drJ3RygsQJj8r9>

For **remaining questions** regarding content or organization of the seminar please send an email to Marco Frank.

Topics for Seminar Papers

The following list provides an overview of potential topics for the seminar papers and presentations. Participants can choose from the list of topics below, but they can also work on an own topic after consultation with the lecturer.

1. Potential topics suitable for literature review

- What factors affect the costs of voting and what are their implications for turnout?
- Elections in times of a pandemic: How does exposure to Covid-19 affect elections and turnout?
- Who profits from an increasing turnout?
- How do natural disasters affect elections?
- Do candidates in local elections profit when they are from the same party as the government – and vice versa?
- Do incumbents profit from an electoral advantage, and if so, why?
- Do districts profit when they are represented by more politicians?
- Does the size of the legislature affect the size of government?
- How do electoral systems shape the incentives and behavior of politicians: majoritarian versus proportional systems.

- Does political competition discipline politicians?
- Do politicians work more when they get higher salaries?
- Politicians and their outside earnings.
- Dynasties in politics and their influencing factors.
- Superficial politics? Do better looking politicians profit in elections?
- Do emotions of politicians matter in politics?
- Why are women so underrepresented in politics?
- Female politicians and the preferences of voters: are women better representatives?
- Do female politicians produce different policy outcomes than male politicians?
- Who becomes a politician? A comparison of different countries.

2. Potential topics for own empirical project

Please contact the lecturer in due time if you are interested in working on an own empirical project. Participants may also propose an own topic if it is analyzable within the context of the seminar.

- Distance to the seat of government and absence in parliament: An analysis for German parliamentarians.
- Emotions and voting behavior in the German Bundestag.
- Are closely elected conservative politicians more progressive in salient roll-call votes than safely elected conservatives?
- Does the flood catastrophe in 2021 affect turnout and voting behavior in the upcoming federal elections?
- Does cabinet size affect the performance of governments?
- Heuristics in elections: do voters use information provided on ballot papers?
- The gender recontest gap in elections for the German federal parliament.
- Electoral reforms: are voters discouraged from voting when their constituencies change?
- Political differences between East and West Germany.
- Analyzing the speeches of parliamentarians in the parliamentary debate of the so-called *Hauptstadtbeschluss*.