

The European Parliament: its election, its actors, and its powers

Syllabus

Spring/Summer 2018

Universität Heidelberg

Institut für Politische Wissenschaft

Bachelor, elective, block course

Instructor: Dr. Elena Frech (Université de Genève)

1 Course description

Within few decades the European Parliament has developed from a consultative assembly into one of the most powerful elected parliaments world-wide. This course provides a research-based introduction to the European Parliament: How is the European Parliament elected? Who are the important actors? And which powers does the European Parliament have? The aim is to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of the election, legislative organisation, decision-making processes, and influence of the European Parliament. This knowledge can serve as a foundation for a future job or for further research in fields like legislative politics, European Union, or international organisation. In addition, the course will enable the students to use the acquired knowledge to analyse current and future problems, to understand and participate in public and scientific debates, and to transfer their knowledge to other contexts.

(Please note: students can only participate in this course if they registered for a presentation and attend the preparatory meeting.)

2 Organisational information

2.1 General information

The class is taught in English language as a weekend or block course. Students who meet all the course requirements (see below) will be awarded 2 LPs (students who decide to write a research paper will receive 8 LPs).

2.2 Dates and deadlines

(Mandatory) Preparatory Meeting: **Friday, June 8th, 2018, between 14:00-15:45**

Course Dates: **July 6th (9:00-18:00) and July 7th, 2018 (10:00-18:00)**

Location: **Building 4310, room 02.034 – University of Heidelberg**

Submission of presentation hand-out: **Friday, June 29th, 2018, by 23:59**

Submission of research paper abstract: **Friday, July 20th, 2018, by 23:59**

Submission of research paper: **Friday, September 14th, 2018**

2.3 Instructor

Dr. Elena Frech

Address: Université de Genève

Département de Science Politique et Relations Internationales

40, Bd du Pont d'Arve

1211 Geneve, Switzerland

Office Hours: (one office hour to talk about the research papers will be announced later, else via e-mail)

Mail: Elena.Frech@unige.ch

Web: www.elenafrech.eu

2.4 Course requirements

Course preparation:

All students participating in this course are asked to read the mandatory readings, marked by an asterisk in the course outline **before** coming to class. The course readings will be available on moodle. Please search for the course at <https://elearning2.uni-heidelberg.de/course/> and register for the course to access readings and other information.

A further requirement is the participation in the preparatory meeting and a presentation in class.

Presentation and hand-out:

All participating students are required to present the current state of the art or summarize a discussion on a specific topic. The topics (see the topics below in the course outline) will be assigned in the preparatory meeting to teams of several students. The presentation should use some kind of visualization (e.g. ppt-slides) and is prepared in teams. Furthermore, the presentation-teams are asked to prepare a discussion question and a hand-out, summarizing the most important facts or arguments of their presentation in class. The topic/question for a follow-up discussion in class after their presentation should be noted on the hand-out. The hand-out is submitted to the instructor as a PDF-File via e-mail by **29.06.2018, 23:59**. If the student has registered a presentation (as an academic assessment via the online system LSF or via form) by the **09.06. 2018** he or she will receive **2 LPs** for a successful presentation and hand-out.

Research paper:

The students can decide to write an individual research paper of 5000 to 9000 words (ca. 20-30 pages). Students who want to write a paper (this is not mandatory) will have to register the paper as an academic assessment (via the online system LSF or via form) by the **28. July 2018**. The paper should meet the standards of a scientific article and has to be submitted to the instructor as a **PDF-File** via e-mail before **Friday, September 14th, 2018, 23:59**. Late submissions will not be accepted. The research papers should answer a clear, theoretically grounded research question that was agreed upon with the instructor. The paper should conduct an analysis, based on primary data sources. Each student will submit an abstract of their research paper by **Friday, July 20th, 2018, 23:59**. After submission of the abstract, the students will have the opportunity to discuss their research paper with the instructor. The student will be awarded **6 LPs** for timely submitting a research paper that meets the requirements.

Grades: Students who meet all course requirements will be awarded 2 LPs for a (registered) presentation (including handout and discussion question) and 6 LPs for a research paper that meets the requirements. The grade is ‘pass’ and ‘fail’.

3 Course outline

Part I: European Elections

Topic 1: The European Elections and Electoral System(s)

Literature:

- Corbett, Jacobs and Neville 2016, Ch.2: pp. 13–34
- Corbett, Jacobs and Neville 2016, Ch.14: pp. 340–348
- *Hobolt 2014

Topic 2: The Electoral Connection

Literature:

- Bowler and Farrell 1993
- Carrubba 2001
- *Hix and Hagemann 2009

Topic 3: The Second Order National Elections Theory

Literature:

- Hix and Marsh 2007
- Reif and Schmitt 1980
- Schmitt and Teperoglou 2015

Part II: Legislative Organisation: the Actors

Topic 4: The Individual Parliamentarians I: Political Careers

Literature:

- Corbett, Jacobs and Neville 2016, Ch.4: pp. 52–84
- Daniel and Metzger 2018

- Fortin-Rittberger and Rittberger 2015
- Scarrow 1997

Topic 5: Committees

Literature:

- *Benedetto 2005
- Corbett, Jacobs and Neville 2016, Ch.7: pp. 167-204
- Mamadouh and Raunio 2003
- Yordanova 2009

Topic 6: Party Groups

Literature:

- Corbett, Jacobs and Neville 2016, Ch.5: pp. 85–150
- Hix, Kreppel and Noury 2003
- Hix, Noury and Roland 2007, Ch.5: pp. 87–104
- *Roger and Winzen 2015

Topic 7: The Individual Parliamentarians II: An Agent with two Principals

Literature:

- Faas 2003
- Hix, Noury and Roland 2007, Ch.7: pp. 132–146
- Hix 2004

Topic 8: Decision-making in Plenary

Literature:

- Corbett, Jacobs and Neville 2016, Ch.9: pp. 219–242
- Noury 2004
- *Slapin and Proksch 2010

Part III: The Powers

Topic 9: The Legislative Powers

Literature:

- Corbett, Jacobs and Neville 2016, Ch.12: pp. 276–319
- *Hix and Hoyland 2013
- Tsebelis, et. al 2001

Topic 10: The Budgetary and Supervisory Powers

Literature:

- Corbett, Jacobs and Neville 2016, Ch.13: pp. 320–339
- Corbett, Jacobs and Neville 2016, Ch.14: pp. 340–364
- Corbett, Jacobs and Neville 2016, Ch.15: pp. 365–394
- Crombez and Hoyland 2015

4 Course readings

* Benedetto, Giacomo (2005) *Rapporteurs as legislative entrepreneurs: the dynamics of the codecision procedure in Europe's Parliament*, **Journal of European Public Policy** Vol. 12 (1), pp. 67–88.

Bowler, Shaun and Farrell, David M. (1993) *Legislator Shirking and Voter Monitoring: Impacts of European Parliament Electoral Systems upon Legislator-Voter Relationships*, **Journal of Common Market Studies** Vol. 31(1), pp. 45–69.

Carrubba, Clifford J. (2001) *The Electoral Connection in European Union Politics*, **The Journal of Politics** Vol. 63 (1), pp. 141–158.

* Corbett, Richard, Jacobs, Francis and Neville, Darren (2016) **The European Parliament**, 9th edition, London (UK): John Harper Publishing.

Crombez, Christophe and Hoyland Bjoern (2015) *The budgetary procedure in the European Union and the implications of the Treaty of Lisbon*, **European Union Politics** Vol. 16 (1), pp. 67–89.

Daniel, William T. and Metzger, Shawna K. (2018) *Within or between jobs? Determinants of membership volatility in the European Parliament, 1979–2014*, **Journal of Legislative Studies** Vol. 24 (1), pp. 90–108.

Faas, Thorsten (2003) *To defect or not to defect? National, institutional and party group pressures on MEPs and their consequences for party group cohesion in the European Parliament*, **European Journal of Political Research** Vol. 42, pp. 841–866.

Fortin-Rittberger and Rittberger (2015) *Nominating women for Europe: Exploring the role of political parties' recruitment procedures for European Parliament elections*, **European Journal of Political Research** Vol. 54, pp. 767–783.

Hix, Simon (2004) *Electoral Institutions and Legislative Behavior: Explaining Voting Defection in the European Parliament*, **World Politics** Vol. 56 (1), pp. 194–223.

* Hix, Simon and Hoyland, Bjoern (2013) *Empowerment of the European Parliament*, **The Annual Review of Political Science** Vol. 16, pp. 171–189.

Hix, Simon and Hagemann (2009) *Could changing the electoral rules fix European parliament elections ?*, **Politique Européenne** Vol. 28 (2), pp. 37–52.

Hix, Simon, Kreppel, Amie and Noury, Abdul G. (2003) *The Party System in the European Parliament: Collusive or Competitive?*, **Journal of Common Market Studies** Vol. 41 (2), pp. 309–331.

Hix, Simon and Marsh, Michael (2007) *Punishment or Protest? Understanding European Parliament Elections*, **The Journal of Politics** Vol. 69 (2), pp. 495–510.

Hix, Simon, Noury, Abdul G. and Roland, Gerard (2007) **Democratic Politics in the European Parliament**, Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press.

*Hobolt, Sara B. (2014) *A Vote for the President? The Role of Spitzenkandidaten in the 2014 European Parliament Elections*, **Journal of European Public Policy** Vol. 21 (10), pp. 1528–1540.

Mamadouh, Virginie and Raunio, Tapio (2003) *The Committee System: Powers Appointments and Report Allocation*, **Journal of Common Market Studies** Vol. 41 (2), pp. 333–351.

Meserve, Stephen A., Pemstein, Daniel and Bernhard, William T. (2009) *Political Ambition and Legislative Behavior in the European Parliament*, **The Journal of Politics** Vol. 71 (3), pp. 1015–1032.

Noury, Abdul G. (2004) *Abstention in daylight: Strategic calculus of voting in the European Parliament*, **Public Choice** Vol. 212 (), pp. 179–211.

Reif, Karlheinz and Schmitt, Hermann (1980) *Nine Second-Order National Elections - A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results*, **European Journal of Political Research** Vol. 8, pp. 3–44.

* Roger, Lea and Winzen, Thomas (2015) *Party groups and committee negotiations in the European Parliament: outside attention and the anticipation of plenary conflict*, **Journal of European Public Policy** Vol. 22 (3), pp. 391–408.

Scarrow, Susan E. (1997) *Political Career Paths and the European Parliament*, **Legislative Studies Quarterly** Vol. 22 (2), pp. 253–263.

Schmitt, Hermann and Teperoglou, Eftichia (2015) *The 2014 European Parliament Elections in Southern Europe: Second Order or Critical Elections?*, **South European Society and Politics** Vol. 20 (3), pp. 287–309.

*Slapin, Jonathan B. and Proksch, Sven-Oliver (2010) *Look who's talking: Parliamentary debate in the European Union*, **European Union Politics** Vol. 11 (3), pp. 333–357.

Trebelis, George, Jensen, Christian B., Kalandrakis, Anastassios and Kreppel, Amie (2001) *Legislative Procedures in the European Union: An Empirical Analysis*, **British Journal of Political Science** Vol. 31, pp. 573–599

Yordanova, Nikoleta (2009) *The Rationale behind Committee Assignment in the European Parliament: Distributive, Informational and Partisan Perspectives*, **European Union Politics** Vol. 10 (2), pp. 253–280.