POLiMETRICS

Syllabus for ATTENDING STUDENTS

(40h – 6 CFU)

Università degli Studi di Milano – Department of Social and Political Sciences

Academic Year 2024-2025

Prof. Andrea Ceron (Course coordinator)
andrea.ceron@unimi.it

Prof. Paride Carrara
paride.carrara@unimi.it

Summary

The course aims to teach the basics of party competition, shedding light on different theories and strategies (ranging from the spatial theory of voting, to theories on issue competition, valence politics, populism, negative campaigning, and so on). In addition, students will learn the main techniques (manual or automated) that allow us to measure political outcomes, with a focus on estimating the positions of political actors. With respect to this, peculiar attention will be devoted to political texts as a source of data. The course will also highlight how artificial intelligence can enhance this process.

Structure of the course (attending students only)

The course is divided into four parts: 1) a theoretical section, in which themes and papers (related to 3 sub-categories) will be presented (they will constitute the object of the midterm exam); 2) the midterm oral exam; 3) a hands-on section, to be done using the statistical software R (https://cran.r-project.org/); 4) a collective brainstorming session related to the research projects (that have to be developed for the final evaluation).

The lectures will take place in a (real!) blended mode, both in class and on MS Teams (code to get access: **doyzcwr**). The lectures will be recorded and will be made available on MS Teams even after the end of the course. You can attend either way. There are no specific advantages/disadvantages if you opt for one or the other mode.

The course has been thought to be intensive, in a "more effort = more learning" framework, with windows of opportunity for active participation (live and asynchronous). Students should follow and study day-by-day in order to get ready for the different steps of the evaluation (see below for further details). In light of this, students need to make a clear-cut choice around whether to take the exam as attending or non-attending students.

Enrollment

Due to the structure of the classes, students willing to take the exam as "attending students" **must enroll** to the course **through the SEFA (UNIMIA)** platform. Enrollment will be available **from April 7th to April 14th** (included). This is crucial to schedule the oral exam and the brainstorming sessions (as well as to define the groups for the final research paper). Students that do not enroll in due time will be considered as non-attending students (no exceptions can be made).

Evaluation

The final mark will combine together four different types of evaluation, weighted as follows:

- **10%** class attendance and **active participation** on the **online MyAriel forum**
- **40%** midterm **oral exam**
- **10%** research design **"brainstorming"**
- **40% research** note/**paper** (in **group**)

Forum

An online forum, available on **MyAriel**, has been created. The purpose of the Forum is twofold.

On the one hand, the Forum is a space in which students can elaborate on the contents of the lectures and on the readings, to make connections between different topics, to report their own ideas and to propose original and innovative viewpoints (about the themes of POLiMETRICS), also with an eye to real-world political events.

On the other hand, the Forum allows students to interact with each other and to provide mutual help. Students are encouraged to ask questions to their colleagues and anyone can answer. The active online participation can be rewarded in the final evaluation.

Oral exam and readings

An oral exam is scheduled at the end of the theoretical section. Students will be divided in two slots (Monday & Tuesday). There is just one week between the last theoretical lecture and the exam, so I warmly suggest to study day-by-day.

The exam will be focused on the contents of all the required readings (all of them are available on **MyAriel**).

Following the classes (day-by-day) and reading the papers on time will be very helpful also to promptly define an idea for writing the research paper.

The "additional readings" are not compulsory, but they can be useful to get inspired in planning and writing the research paper (note that all these additional readings are compulsory for non-attending students). The "suggested readings" and the "companions" are not compulsory, but they can be useful to follow the "hands-on section" of the course.

Reseach note/Research paper

Students will be divided into small groups (approximately 3-5 students each, depending on the final class size) to write a brief analytical research paper (say, a research note: 2000-4000 words) using the methods learnt during the course, answering their own research question(s) by estimating the positions of political actors.

The first sketch of the research project has to be presented at the end of the course (see the next section for details). The final deadline for sending the whole paper is set on Tuesday 22/7, 23.59 (approximately one month after the end of the classes). The final paper must be sent to my email address (andrea.ceron@unimi.it) together with the dataset and the replication code. To register their final mark, students must enroll to the exam scheduled on Wednesday 23/7. Notice that the score of the research paper will be the same for each group member, unless the members agree on (and release) a different evaluation of their individual contributions.

Research design brainstorming

A) The last two days of the course will be devoted to host a "Research design brainstorming" (in two sessions). Each group will present, to the whole class, a draft of its intended project in a slide-show format. This draft should outline the research design, present the general idea and the research question(s), as well as the data (specifying where/how to get access to them) and the method(s) that the group is planning to use. The presentation should last approximately 20' though the exact length will depend on the number of groups.

The slides and the presentations are not subjected to evaluation (no mark!).

B) All the other students, jointly with the professor, are required to give suggestions on how to improve the research design, request clarifications, discuss about other potential directions of the project and about further details that the project must consider.

This live participation, in a brainstorming mode, is subjected to evaluation!

C) Through these brainstorming sessions, students will learn how to define, present and defend a research project and how to reflect on, and deal with, criticism; they will also learn how to review and critically comment on someone else's research; finally, they will experience that (political) science is a collective effort (check back your notes from the 1st year Political Science course). Taking into account the comments received by the audience, in the final research paper, is not mandatory. However, carefully pondering them and implementing those that seem more promising for improving the project might lead to bonus points for the group.

Course Schedule

1) Theoretical section

1A) Positions

Day 1: Course presentation & introduction

Monday 7/4, 10.30-12.00

Required readings:

Syllabus

Benoit, K., & Laver, M. (2006). Chapter 3: Empirical policy spaces. In: Benoit, K., & Laver, M. (2006). *Party Policy in Modern Democracies* (pre-print draft).

Additional readings:

Benoit, K., & Laver, M. (2006). Chapter 4: Measuring Policy Positions. In: Benoit, K., & Laver, M. (2006). *Party Policy in Modern Democracies* (pre-print draft).

Grofman, B. (2004). Downs and Two-Party Convergence. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 7(1), 25-46 https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.7.012003.104711

Day 2: Expert surveys

Tuesday 8/4, 10.30-12.00

Required readings:

Bakker, R., de Vries, C., Edwards, E., Hooghe, L., Jolly, S., Marks, G., Polk, J., Rovny, J., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M. A. (2015). Measuring party positions in Europe: The Chapel Hill expert survey trend file, 1999–2010. *Party Politics*, *21*(1), 143–152. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068812462931

Polk, J., Rovny, J., Bakker, R., Edwards, E., Hooghe, L., Jolly, S., Koedam, J., Kostelka, F., Marks, G., Schumacher, G., Steenbergen, M., Vachudova, M., & Zilovic, M. (2017). Explaining the salience of anti-elitism and reducing political corruption for political parties in Europe with the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey data. *Research & Politics*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168016686915

Supplementary materials:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5975c9bfdb29d6a05c65209b/t/5fa04ec05d3c8218b7c91450/1604341440585/2019_CHES_codebook.pdf

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5975c9bfdb29d6a05c65209b/t/5ed3029fe080e33f639e6e9a/1590887075513/CHES_UK_Qualtrics.pdf

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5975c9bfdb29d6a05c65209b/t/603fbb4ee47d721eed0046a0/1614789457024/1999-2019_CHES_codebook.pdf

Jolly, S., Bakker, R., Hooghe, L., Marks, G., Polk, J., Rovny, J., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M.A. (2022). Chapel Hill Expert Survey trend file, 1999–2019. Electoral Studies, 75(102420), 1-8, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102420

Day 3: Comparative manifesto project

Monday 14/4, 10.30-12.00

Required readings:

Volkens, A. (2007). Strengths and weaknesses of approaches to measuring policy positions of parties. *Electoral Studies*, 26(1), 108–120, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2006.04.003.

Klingemann, H.-D., Volkens, A., Budge, I., Bara, J., & McDonald, M.D. (2006). Introducing the Manifesto Data: Background. In: Klingemann, H.-D., Volkens, A., Budge, I., Bara, J., & McDonald, M.D. (2006). *Mapping Policy Preferences II: Parties, Electorates and Governments in Eastern Europe and the OECD 1990-2003*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006.

Supplementary materials:

https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/down/data/2021a/codebooks/codebook_MPDataset_MPDS2021a.pdf

Additional readings:

Merz, N., Regel, S., & Lewandowski, J. (2016). The Manifesto Corpus: A new resource for research on political parties and quantitative text analysis. *Research & Politics.* https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168016643346

Zulianello, M. (2014). Analyzing party competition through the comparative manifesto data: some theoretical and methodological considerations. *Quality and Quantity*, 48, 1723–1737. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-013-9870-0

Klingemann, H.-D., Volkens, A., Budge, I., Bara, J., & McDonald, M.D. (2006). Chapter 4: Evaluating Validity with the Standard Left-Right Scale: Matching Measurements to Conceptual Intentions. In: Klingemann, H.-D., Volkens, A., Budge, I., Bara, J., & McDonald, M.D. (2006). *Mapping Policy Preferences II: Parties, Electorates and Governments in Eastern Europe and the OECD 1990-2003*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006.

Day 4: Scaling methods (Wordfish & Wordscores)

Tuesday 15/4, 10.30-12.00

Required readings:

Ceron, A. (2015). The Politics of Fission: An Analysis of Faction Breakaways among Italian Parties (1946–2011). *British Journal of Political Science*, 45(1), 121-139. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123413000215

Hjorth, F., Klemmensen, R., Hobolt, S., Hansen, M. E., & Kurrild-Klitgaard, P. (2015). Computers, coders, and voters: Comparing automated methods for estimating party positions. *Research & Politics.* https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168015580476

Additional readings:

Braby, D., Guinaudeau, B., & Sältzer, M. (2022). Scaling models in political science. In A. Ceron (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Technology and Politics*, pp. 98-105. Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.

Grimmer, J., & Stewart, B.M. (2013). Text as data: The promise and pitfalls of automatic content analysis methods for political texts. *Political Analysis*, 21(3):267–297. doi:10.1093/pan/mps028

Day 5: Ambiguity vs Clarity

Monday 28/4, 10.30-12.00

Required readings:

Rovny, J. (2012). Who emphasizes and who blurs? Party strategies in multidimensional competition. *European Union Politics*, *13*(2), 269–292. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116511435822

Lo, J., Proksch, S., & Slapin, J. (2016). Ideological Clarity in Multiparty Competition: A New Measure and Test Using Election Manifestos. *British Journal of Political Science*, 46(3), 591-610. doi:10.1017/S0007123414000192

Additional readings:

Giebler, H., Lacewell, O.P., Regel, S., & Werner, A. (2018). Chapter 7: Decline or Change? Party Types and the Crisis of Representative Democracy. In: W. Merkel, S. Kneip (eds): *Democracy and Crisis. Challenges in Turbulent Times.* Wiesbaden: Springer VS

1B) Issues

Day 6: Issue competition & issue ownership

Tuesday 29/4, 10.30-12.00

Required readings:

Wagner, M., & Meyer, T.M. (2014). Which Issues do Parties Emphasise? Salience Strategies and Party Organisation in Multiparty Systems. *West European Politics*, 37(5), 1019-1045, DOI: 10.1080/01402382.2014.911483

Additional readings:

De Sio, L., De Angelis, A., & Emanuele, V. (2018). Issue Yield and Party Strategy in Multiparty Competition. Comparative Political Studies, 51(9), 1208–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414017730082

Day 7: Broad appeal strategy

Monday 5/5, 10.30-12.00

Required readings:

Somer-Topcu, Z. (2015). Everything to Everyone: The Electoral Consequences of the Broad-Appeal Strategy in Europe. *American Journal of Political Science*. 59, 841-854. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12165

van Heck, S. (2018). Appealing broadly or narrowing down? The impact of government experience and party organization on the scope of parties' issue agendas. *Party Politics*. 24(4), 347–357. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068816657374

Day 8: Niche parties & Nicheness

Tuesday 6/5, 10.30-12.00

Required readings:

Bischof, D. (2017). Towards a renewal of the niche party concept: Parties, market shares and condensed offers. *Party Politics*, *23*(3), 220–235. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068815588259

Additional readings:

Bischof, D., & Wagner, M. (2020). What Makes Parties Adapt to Voter Preferences? The Role of Party Organization, Goals and Ideology. *British Journal of Political Science*, 50(1), 391-401. doi:10.1017/S0007123417000357

Day 9: Topic models

Monday 12/5, 10.30-12.00

Required readings:

Genovese, F. (2015). Politics ex cathedra: Religious authority and the Pope in modern international relations. *Research & Politics*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168015612808

Ceron, A., & Greene, Z. (2019). Verba volant, scripta manent? Intra-party politics, party conferences, and issue salience in France. *Party Politics*, *25*(5), 701–711. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068819836034

Additional readings:

Lucas, C., Nielsen, R., Roberts, M., Stewart, B., Storer, A., & Tingley, D. (2015). Computer-Assisted Text Analysis for Comparative Politics. Political Analysis, 23(2), 254-277. doi:10.1093/pan/mpu019

1C) Other features

[valence, negativity, populism, unity, …]

Day 10: Other rhetorical & electoral strategies

Tuesday 13/5, 10.30-12.00

Required readings:

Kosmidis, S., Hobolt, S. B., Molloy, E., & Whitefield, S. (2019). Party Competition and Emotive Rhetoric. *Comparative Political Studies*, *52*(6), 811-837. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414018797942

Rooduijn, M., & Pauwels, T. (2011). Measuring Populism: Comparing Two Methods of Content Analysis. *West European Politics*, 34(6), 1272-1283. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2011.616665

Schumacher, G., Hansen, D., van der Velden, M. A. C. G., & Kunst, S. (2019). A new dataset of Dutch and Danish party congress speeches. *Research & Politics*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168019838352

Additional readings:

Ceron, A. (2017). Intra-party politics in 140 characters. *Party Politics*, *23*(1), 7-17. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068816654325

Ceron, A., & Volpi, E. (2022), How do parties react to defections? Electoral strategies after a valence loss. *European Journal of Political Research*, *61*(4), 1042-1059.

Dolezal, M., Ennser-Jedenastik, L., Müller, W. C., Praprotnik, K., & Winkler, A. K. (2018). Beyond salience and position taking: How political parties communicate through their manifestos. *Party Politics*, *24*(3), 240–252. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068816678893

Gründl, J. (2020). Populist ideas on social media: A dictionary-based measurement of populist communication. *New Media & Society*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820976970

2) Road to evaluation (I)

Day 11: Oral exam (I)

Monday 19/5, 10.30-12.00

Day 12: Oral exam (II)

Tuesday 20/5, 10.30-12.00

3) Hands-on section

[*bring your laptop*]

Suggested readings:

Lucas, C., Nielsen, R., Roberts, M., Stewart, B., Storer, A., & Tingley, D. (2015). Computer-Assisted Text Analysis for Comparative Politics. *Political Analysis*, 23(2), 254-277. doi:10.1093/pan/mpu019

Grimmer, J., & Stewart, B.M. (2013). Text as data: The promise and pitfalls of automatic content analysis methods for political texts. *Political Analysis*, 21(3):267–297. doi:10.1093/pan/mps028

Companions:

Watanabe, K., & Müller, S. (2021) *Quanteda Tutorials*. https://tutorials.quanteda.io.

Benoit, K., Watanabe, K., Wang, H., Nulty, P., Obeng, A., Müller, S., & Matsuo, A. (2018) quanteda: An R package for the quantitative analysis of textual data. *Journal of Open Source Software* 3(30), 774. https://doi.org/10.21105/joss.00774. [OPEN ACCESS]

Day 13: Introduction to R and RStudio with CHES and MARPOR

Monday 26/5, 10.30-12.00

+ Additional contents (that will be made available on MyAriel)

13b) Data collection: Manifesto, CHES, political texts

13c) How to write a research paper & hints for your research note

Day 14: Introduction to Text Analysis

Tuesday 27/5, 10.30-12.00

Day 15: Basic Analysis, Dictionaries & Sentiment Analysis

Thursday 29/5, 12.30-14.00

Day 16: Scaling Methods

Tuesday 3/6, 10.30-12.00

Day 17: Topic Models

Monday 9/6, 10.30-12.00

Day 18: Artificial Intelligence and LLM

Tuesday 10/6, 10.30-12.00

4) Road to evaluation (II)

Day 19: Research design brainstorming (I)

Monday 16/6, 10.30-12.00

Day 20: Research design brainstorming (II)

Tuesday 17/6, 10.30-12.00

Mandatory <u>deadline</u> for sending the final research paper, dataset and replication code

<u>Tuesday 22/7, 23.59</u>

Remember:

To register their mark, students must enroll to the exam scheduled on Wednesday 23/7.

Next scheduled exams (so far)

Thursday **26/6**, 12.30, oral, location TBD (<u>non-attending</u> students only!)

Wednesday **23/7**, 8.30, oral, location TBD (<u>non-attending</u> students only!)

- <u>attending</u> students have to register but don't need to show up

Tuesday **9/9**, 8.30, oral, location TBD (<u>non-attending</u> students only!)

Additional dates TBD