

University of Rochester Political Science

Psc 586/ECO 582
Theory of Voting and Elections/PE II

Prof. Mark Fey
Spring 2015

Syllabus & Reading List

This course covers much of the modern game theoretic literature on models of voting and elections. It is meant to give students a thorough understanding of the theory and models used in this line of research. The course covers both complete and incomplete information models and thus students must have completed PSC584 (or its equivalent) prior to taking this course.

A classic series of the Helliwell-Blanchard model. The course examines the many extensions of this framework. Extensions include probabilistic voting, policy motivated candidates, and issues of commitment and agenda control in elections. The next set of topics for the course focuses on models of multi-candidate elections, including models of the Duverger Law. The remainder of the course deals with issues of information in elections, including strategic voting, the participation of voters and candidates, and problems associated with private information in elections.

There are three main obligations for students taking the course. Reading the required articles and participating in class is the first and most important of the obligations. This is reinforced by requiring a student presenting one of the topics from the reading list. Assignments of topics will be worked out at the first class meeting. The last requirement for the course is a final paper. The choice of topic for the final paper is left open. Some possibilities include a detailed survey of one of the topics of the course (perhaps linked to your presentation topic), an extension of a model discussed in class, or a new

Schedule: Starting on the next page is the list of topics and the scheduled readings for the course. We will follow this schedule as closely as possible. Naturally, this schedule may change as the semester unfolds.

Jan. 14: Introductory Thoughts and Review

Jan. 21: Policy-Motivated Candidates and Probabilistic Voting

- Calvert (1985); Duggan and Fey (2005); Hinich (1977); Banks and Duggan (2005)

Jan. 28: Valence, Effort, and Electoral Contests

- Meirowitz (2008); Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita (2009); Serra (2010);

Feb. 4: Voter Turnout Models

- Ledyard (1984); Palfrey and Rosenthal (1983); Palfrey and Rosenthal (1985); Kalandrakis (2009)

Feb. 11: Candidate Entry

- Palfrey (1984); Greenberg and Shepsle (1987); Weber (1992); Osborne (1993)

Feb. 18: Citizen Candidates and Voting for Policies

- Feddersen (1992); Osborne and Shubert (1996); Becker and Coate (1997)

Feb. 25: Strategic Voting and Duverger's Law

- Palfrey (1989); Myerson and Weber (1993); Fey (1997); Feddersen et al. (1990); Cox (1994); Morelli (2004)

Mar. 4: Elections with Multiple Candidates and Alternative Voting Systems

- Cox (1987); Cox (1990); Dellis (2011)

Mar. 11: Spring break

Mar. 18: Private Information, the Swing Voter's Curse, and Jury Theorems

- Austen-Smith and Banks (1996); Feddersen and Pesendorfer (1996); Feddersen and Pesendorfer (1997); Fey and Kim (2009)

Mar. 25 Pandering

- Canes-Wrone et al. (2001); Maskin and Tirole (2004); Fox (2007)

~~Apr. 1 Public Information and Policy~~

- Meiwowitz (2005); Goeree and Großer (2007); Taylor and Yildirim (2010)

~~Apr. 8 Aggregate Uncertainty~~

- Myatt 2007; Myatt 2012

~~Apr. 15 Campaigns and Signaling~~

- Banks (1990); Callander and Wilkie (2007); Callander (2008); Kartik and McAfee (2007); Acemoglu et al. (2013)

Apr. 22 Special Interests and Voting

- Coate and Morris (1995); Dixit and Londregan (1995) Ashworth (2006)

Apr. 29 Final Class

References

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- Ashworth, Scott 2006. "Campaign finance and entrenched incumbents." *American Political Science Review*, 100: 55-60.
- Ashworth, Scott and Ethan Przeworski 2000. "The platform and the preference competition." *Games and Economic Behavior*, 32: 191-216.
- Austen-Smith, David and Jeffrey S. Banks 1996. "Information Aggregation, Rationality, and the Condorcet Jury Theorem," *American Political Science Review*, 90, 34-45. (JSTOR).
- Banks, Jeffrey S. 1990. "A Model of Electoral Competition with Incomplete Information." *Journal of Economic Theory*, 50: 309-325.
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- Besley, Timothy and Stephen Coate 1997. "An Economic Model of Representative Democracy." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 112, 85-114. (JSTOR).
- Callander, Steven 2008. "Political motivations." *Review of Economic Studies*, 75, 671-697.
- Callander, Steven and Simon Willie 2007. "The role of campaign finance in the spatial model of elections." *Games and Economic Behavior*, 60, 262-286.
- Calvert, Randall J. 1985. "Robustness of the Multidimensional Voting Model: Candidate Motivations, Uncertainty, and Convergence," *American Journal of Political Science*, 30, 60-85. (JSTOR).
- Canes-Wrone, Brandice, Michael C. Herron, and Kenneth W. Shotts 2001. "Leadership and pandering: A theory of executive policymaking," *American Journal of Political Science*, pages 532-550.

Cox, Stephen and Stephen Merrill 2005. "On the Efficiency of Alternative Voting Systems." *Journal of Political Economy*, 113, 1260-1287.

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Dellis, Arnaud 2011. "The Two-Party System under Alternative Voting Procedures

Dixit, Anirban and John Lindgren 2005. "Redistributive Politics and Economic Efficiency," *American Political Science Review*, 89, 856-866. (JSTOR).

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Fey, Mark 1997. "Stability and Coordination in Duverger's Law: A Formal Model of Pre-Election Polls and Strategic Voting." *American Political Science Review*, 91, 135-147. (JSTOR).

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Fox, Justin 2007. "Government transparency and policymaking." *Public Choice*, 121, 22-44.

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