

University of Rochester Political Science

Psc 586
Theory of Voting and Elections

Prof. Mark Fey
Fall 2018

Syllabus & Reading List

This course covers much of the modern game-theoretic literature on models of voting and elections. It is meant to expose students to the techniques 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.

After a review of the Hotelling-Black one-dimensional model of elections, the course examines the many extensions of this basic model. Such 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 candidate entry and strategic voting by members of the electorate. Finally, the remainder of the course deals with issues of information in elections, including uncertainty on the part 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. The second obligation is taking a turn presenting one of the topics from the reading list. Assignments of topics will be worked out at

Week 1 Introductory Thoughts and Review

Week 2 Policy-Motivated Candidates and Probabilistic Voting

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

Week 3 Candidate Quality

Ansolabehere and Snyder (2000); **Groseclose (2001)**;
Aragones and Palfrey (2002); **Aragones and Xefteris (2012)**

Week 4 Voter Turnout Models

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

Week 5 Candidate Entry

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

Week 6 Citizen Candidates and Voting for Policies

Feddersen (1992); **Osborne and Slivinski (1996)**; Besley and Coate (1997)

Week 7 Strategic Voting and Duverger's Law

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

Week 8 Elections with Multiple Candidates and Alternative Voting Systems

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

Week 9 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 (2002)

Week 10 Pandering

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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.

Casella, Alessandra 2005. "Storable votes," *Games and Economic Behavior*, 51, 391-419.

Cox, Gary W. 1987. "Electoral Equilibrium under Alternative Voting Institutions," *American Journal of Political Science*, 31, 82-108. (JSTOR).

Cox, Gary W. 1990. "Centripital and Centrifugal Incentives in Electoral Systems,"

Feddersen, Timothy J., Itai Sened, and Stephen G. Wright 1990.
"Sophisticated Voting and Candidate Entry Under Plurality Rule,"
American Journal of Political Science, 34, 1005-1016. (JSTOR).

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Tyson, Scott A 2016. "Information acquisition, strategic voting, and improving the quality of democratic choice," *The Journal of Politics*, 78, 1016{1031.

Weber, Shlomo 1992. "On Hierarchical Spatial Competition," *Review of Economic Studies*, 59, 407{425. (JSTOR).