

Fachbereich 03 Gesellschaftswissenschaften  
Institut für Politikwissenschaft  
Professur für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft  
Campus Westend, Theodor-W.-Adorno-Platz 6  
60323 Frankfurt am Main



Roni Lehrer, PhD  
Campus Westend, PEG 3.G085  
Lehrer@soz.uni-frankfurt.de

Office Hours by appointment: Thursday 11am-12noon

Seminar:  
**Government Formation and Termination in Parliamentary Systems**

Course Outline  
(version: 19 October 2023)

Winter Term 2023/2024  
Monday, 4pm-8pm  
Seminar building - SH 3.107  
Moduls: PW-MA-2b/3b/4b, PW-MA-2a/3a/4a, CD-MA-D2  
First session on 19 October 2023

The formation of a new government and the termination of a government are key moments in every democracy's politics. In this seminar, we will study why specific governments, and especially specific coalition governments, (do not) form, how long they take to form, how they distribute ministries, and how they formulate policies. We will also examine under what circumstances (coalition) governments survive their entire term in office, and when they terminate early. Moreover, we will study how government formation and government termination are intertwined.

**Learning objectives**

Provided you read the assigned literature and participated in classes actively, you will

- Command basic knowledge of how current political science research explains coalition government formation, coalition policy-making and coalition government termination
- Have improve your theoretical understanding of complex political decision-making
- Improve your academic writing and reading skills

**Expectations**

You should have an open mind toward quantitative methods and rational theories in political science. Ideally – but this is by no means is prerequisite – you are able to interpret an Ordinary Least Squares

Regression (OLS). If you are not, you will learn this on this course.

## Literature

We will mostly read research articles and a couple of other sources. Details can be found below and in the seminar's OLAT course.

## Enrollment

Classes start on 19 October 2023. Students can enroll via the central enrollment systems at the Fachbereich 03 according to its rules. If you have questions concerning the enrollment procedure, please contact the Studiendekanat.

## Requirements

Participants can receive a participation certificate (3 CP) as well as a marked record (Modulabschlussprüfung). A participation certificate requires (1) steady attendance and a (2) presentation. A marked record requires an additional term paper which is marked with "passed" (4,0) or better.

In class, we will discuss the assigned literature. To receive a participation certificate (3 CP), you must (1) not have missed class more than twice, (2) read and engaged with the assigned literatures, and (3) give a presentation on an assigned reading (roughly 15mins) in class. The presentation should present the assigned reading and link it to the readings that all participants read. I expect you to use slides (e.g., Powerpoint) for your presentation.

For a marked record (5CP, Modulabschlussprüfung) you also need to submit a term paper that is graded as passed (4,0) or better. Your term paper should not exceed 20 pages and has to be submitted no later than 5 April 2024 5pm by email to [Lehrer@soz.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:Lehrer@soz.uni-frankfurt.de). Additional guidelines for the term paper will be communicated during classes.

**Please indicate until 26 October 8pm if you want to take this course. If you wish to receive a participation certificate or a marked record for this seminar, please indicate at least three sessions for which you are willing give a presentation at <https://terminplaner6.dfn.de/p/ebec1182c33698b8bfb6845af4f6f46d-408340>. I will inform you about the presentation schedule in the following days.**

**If you study in any program that allows for an electronic registration for this seminar's exams (e.g., participation certificate or marked record), you need to register for your examination online and in advance.** Please note the rules the corresponding Prüfungsamt sets. I cannot officially acknowledge your work otherwise.

## Schedule

Session	Date	Topic
1	19 Oct 23	Introduction, Basics of Empirical-Analytical Political Science
	26 Oct 23	Organization Week
2	2 Nov 23	Coalition Game
3	9 Nov 23	Rational Choice in Political Science
4	16 Nov 23	Parties as coalitions, party motives
5	23 Nov 23	Bargaining theories
	30 Nov 23	No Class (International Workshop)
6	7 Dec 23	Coalition formation
7	14 Dec 23	Government portfolio allocation
8	21 Dec 23	How coalitions end
Winter Break		
9	11 Jan 24	After coalitions end
10	18 Jan 24	How coalitions survive I
11	25 Jan 24	How coalitions survive II
12	1 Feb 24	Why do coalitions constantly fight?
13	8 Feb 24	Conclusions and Final Paper

## Course Outline

Mandatory reading for all participants is marked with an \*. Readings for presentations are denoted by a +.

### **Session 1 (19 October 2023): Introduction and Organization**

**(26 October 2023): Organization Week – No Class**

**Please indicate until 26 October 8pm if you want to take this course. If you wish to receive a participation certificate or a marked record for this seminar, please indicate at least three sessions for which you are willing to submit a discussion and give a presentation at <https://terminplaner6.dfn.de/p/ebec1182c33698b8bfb6845af4f6f46d-408340>. I will inform you about the presentation schedule in the following days.**

### **Session 2 (2 November 2023): A Coalition game**

We will play a game in class. You don't need to prepare anything. Just come to class, play the game, and win.

You can find descriptions of various version of the game in:

Laver, Michael. 1997. *Playing politics: The nightmare continues*. Oxford: Oxford University Pres.

### **Session 3 (9 November 2023): Rational Choice in Political Science**

\*Laver, Michael. *Private desires, political action: an invitation to the politics of rational choice*. Sage, 1997. Chapter 2.

+Laver, Michael. *Private desires, political action: an invitation to the politics of rational choice*. Sage, 1997. Chapter 3.

### **Session 4 (16 November 2023): Parties as coalitions, party motives**

\*Aldrich, John H. *Why Parties?: a second look*. University of Chicago Press, 2011. Chapter 2.

+Strøm, Kaare, and Wolfgang C. Müller. "Political parties and hard choices." *Policy, office, or votes* (1999): 1-35.

### **Session 5 (23 November 2023): Bargaining Theories**

\*Muthoo, Abhinay. "A non-technical introduction to bargaining theory." *World Economics-Henley on Thames*- 1.2 (2000): 145-166.

+Putnam, Robert D. "Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games." *International organization*. Routledge, 2017. 437-470.

### **Session 6 (7 December 2023): Coalition Formation**

\*Laver, Michael. *Private desires, political action: An invitation to the politics of rational choice*. Sage, 1997. Kapitel 7.

+Bergman, Torbjörn. "Formation rules and minority governments." *European Journal of Political Research* 23.1 (1993): 55-66.

**Session 7 (14 December 2023): Portfolio allocation**

\*Bäck, Hanna, Marc Debus, and Patrick Dumont. "Who gets what in coalition governments? Predictors of portfolio allocation in parliamentary democracies." *European Journal of Political Research* 50.4 (2011): 441-478.

+Warwick, Paul V., and James N. Druckman. "The portfolio allocation paradox: An investigation into the nature of a very strong but puzzling relationship." *European Journal of Political Research* 45.4 (2006): 635-665.

**Session 8 (21 December 2023): How coalitions end**

\*Lupia, Arthur, and Kaare Strøm. "Coalition termination and the strategic timing of parliamentary elections." *American Political Science Review* 89.3 (1995): 648-665.

+Krauss, Svenja, and Maria Thürk. "Stability of minority governments and the role of support agreements." *West European Politics* 45.4 (2022): 767-792.

**Session 9 (11 January 2024): When a coalition has ended**

\*Tavits, Margit. "The role of parties' past behavior in coalition formation." *American Political Science Review* 102.4 (2008): 495-507.

+Warwick, Paul V. "Dissolvers, disputers, and defectors: the terminators of parliamentary governments." *European Political Science Review* 4.2 (2012): 263-281.

**Session 10 (18 January 2024): How coalitions (try to) survive I**

\*Klüver, Heike, Hanna Bäck, and Svenja Krauss. *Coalition Agreements as Control Devices: Coalition Governance in Western and Eastern Europe*. Oxford University Press, 2023. Chapter 5.

+Klüver, Heike, Hanna Bäck, and Svenja Krauss. *Coalition Agreements as Control Devices: Coalition Governance in Western and Eastern Europe*. Oxford University Press, 2023. Chapter 7.

**Session 11 (25 January 2024): How coalitions (try to) survive II**

\*Martin, Lanny W., and Georg Vanberg. *Parliaments and coalitions: The role of legislative institutions in multiparty governance*. Oxford University Press, 2011. Chapter 3.

+Lipsmeyer, Christine S., and Heather Nicole Pierce. "The eyes that bind: Junior ministers as oversight mechanisms in coalition governments." *The Journal of Politics* 73.4 (2011): 1152-1164.

**Session 12 (1 February 2024): Why do coalitions constantly fight?**

\*[https://www.cambridge.org/files/5716/1550/0691/Cycle-of-Coalition\\_Final-Comic.pdf](https://www.cambridge.org/files/5716/1550/0691/Cycle-of-Coalition_Final-Comic.pdf)

\*Fortunato, David. *The cycle of coalition: How parties and voters interact under coalition governance*. Cambridge University Press, 2021. Chapter 3.

+Fortunato, David. *The cycle of coalition: How parties and voters interact under coalition governance*. Cambridge University Press, 2021. Chapter 4.

**Session 13 (8 February 2024): Conclusion and Final Paper**