

P2.2: POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

LMU Munich, Winter Term 2024/25

Instructor:	Julian Michel	Time:	Monday: 10am-noon s.t.
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Course Website:	Moodle	Office Hours:	Monday: 3-5pm or by apt.

Course Description

Politics is about “who gets what, when, and how”, as Harold Laswell famously put it. Even in modern democracies, despite their promise of political equality, political representation appears to be uneven. Some citizens have their preferences better reflected in political decisions, thereby getting more out of politics than others. This course will place Germany in a comparative perspective to examine (a) concepts of representation, (b) what we know about explanations for inequality in representation, and (c) how unequal representation affects life outcomes we care about.

Learning Outcomes

In the first half of this course, you will learn about what political representation is and how it is shaped by institutions (e.g., electoral systems) as well as actors (citizens, voters, parties, and interest groups). In the second half, we will examine dimensions around which inequalities in political representation tend to materialize: gender, class, region, and age. Here, we will also ask (a) what consequences unequal representation has and (b) how such inequality could be reduced. Towards the end, we will explore arguments around whether there is a contemporary crisis of political representation and, if so, how democracy may need to be reformed for political equality to increase. As this course is part of the module on the “Political System of Germany”, we will give special emphasis to the German case, but will place it in comparative perspective throughout.

Expectations and Grading

The requirements for this class (6 ECTS) are as follows. Note that they differ for students enrolled in the degree program “teacher training” (“Lehramt”), as explained below.

- *Attendance:* Attendance is mandatory.
- *Reading Assignments:* It is imperative that you complete the readings before our meetings. You can access them via our course website.
- *In-Class Participation:* I invite students to participate frequently. High-quality contributions demonstrate that you developed your own insights building on the theories and empirical findings discussed.
- *Final exam, February 3 - 100%:* The final exam will cover both the content from this course and the lecture by Prof. Nicole Bolleyer (“Political System of Germany”, Monday, 2-4pm). You pass the exam by scoring at least a 4.0 to complete the module P2 (“Political System of Germany”). **You need to register for the module exam via LSF ([link](#)) between 26.11 and 14.12.2024 to receive credit in this course!** The exam can be retaken twice unless you missed an earlier attempt unexcused (then only one retake).
- *If “teacher training” (“Lehramt”):* Students hold a presentation of approx. 20 minutes on a topic we agreed on. Please come see me in office hours no later than one week before your presentation to discuss the content. We will allocate topics in our first meeting. Note that both the presentation and exam have to be passed (4.0 or better) to complete the module and that the final grade is given equally by the presentation and the exam.

- *If visiting student*: Please see me in office hours to discuss with me how many ECTS you need and which deliverables are appropriate (no exam for you, but likely a presentation and/ or essay).

Tentative Schedule

Week 1: The Concept of Political Representation (October 14)

- Stanford Encyclopedia 2018: Political Representation.

Week 2: Public Opinion, Representation, and Responsiveness (October 21)

- Bardes and Oldendick 2015. Public Opinion. Measuring the American Mind. Part 1. (Public Opinion and American Democracy.)
- Wlezien and Soroka 2007. The Relationship Between Public Opinion and Policy.

Week 3: Institutional Determinants of Representation I (October 28)

- Powell 2000. Elections as Instruments of Democracy. Majoritarian and Proportional Visions.
- Lijphart 2012. Patterns of Democracy. Chapters 1-2.

Week 4: Institutional Determinants of Representation II (November 4)

- Ashworth 2012. Electoral Accountability: Recent Theoretical and Empirical Work.
- Downs 1957. An Economic Theory of Democracy.

Week 5: Political Participation and Representation (November 11)

- Newton and Van Deth 2021. Political Attitudes and Behaviour.
- Dalton 2021. Political Inequality and Democratic Process.

Week 6: Parties and Representation (November 18)

- Strom and Mueller 2010. Political Parties and Hard Choices. Chapter 1.
- Aldrich 2011. Why Parties? A Second Look. Chapter 1.

Week 7: Interest Groups and Representation (November 25)

- Erne 2020. Interest Groups.
- Ahlquist 2017. Labor Unions, Political Representation, and Economic Inequality.

Week 8: Gender (December 2)

- UN Women 2024: Women Political Leaders 2024.
- UN Women 2024: Why So Few Women Are in Political Leadership, and Five Actions to Boost Women's Political Participation.
- Fox and Lawless 2014. Uncovering the Origins of the Gender Gap in Political Ambition.

Week 9: Class (December 9)

- Rosset 2016. Economically Based Inequalities in Political Representation: Where Do They Come From?
- Lupu and Warner 2022. Affluence and Congruence: Unequal Representation around the World.

Week 10: Region (December 16)

- Reiser and Reiter 2023. A (New) East–West-Divide? Representative Democracy in Germany 30 Years after Unification.
- Weisskircher 2020. The Strength of Far-Right AfD in Eastern Germany: The East-West Divide and the Multiple Causes behind ‘Populism’.

Week 11: Climate Change and Intergenerational Representation (January 13)

- Council on Foreign Relations 2022: How Green Party Success is Reshaping Global Politics.
- Keohane and Victor 2016. Cooperation and Discord in Global Climate Policy.

Week 12: Intersectional Perspectives (January 20)

- [United Nations 2022: Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit](#)

Week 13: Is There a Contemporary Crisis of Political Representation & Alternative Visions of Democracy (January 27)

- Mudde 2021. Populism in Europe: An Illiberal Democratic Response to Undemocratic Liberalism.
- [New Yorker 2020: Politics Without Politicians](#).

Week 14: Final Exam (February 3, to be written in lecture)**Suggested Readings (For Additional Background)**

- Vieira et al. 2008: Representation. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Childs et al. 2013: Political Representation. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cotta et al. 2020: Research Handbook on Political Representation. Cheltenham & Northampton: Edward Elgar.
- Pitkin 1967: The concept of representation. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rohrschneider et al. 2020: The Oxford Handbook of Political Representation in Liberal Democracies. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Class Policies

- Academic dishonesty: I am required to submit all instances of suspected plagiarism to the Dean of Students. When in doubt, please make sure to review LMU's academic integrity resources online or contact me. Note that the use of AI tools in generating presentations and other class content is considered plagiarism.
- Communication between us: It might take up to 24 hours for me to answer your email. If your email contains multiple questions about class content, it would be more productive for both of us if you could attend my office hours instead.
- Late submissions: If you hand in your presentation and/ or outline late without my approval, you will lose one grade increment (e.g., 1.0 becomes 1.3) for every 24 hour period that started after the deadline passed. If you submit your work more than three days late, your work will not be considered and automatically receive a failing grade. If you cannot submit on time due to an emergency, please contact me before the deadline so that we can find a solution.
- Absences: If you cannot attend our meetings due to emergencies, religious holidays, or major unavoidable conflicts, please get in touch with me as early as possible. Within reason I can excuse well-justified absences.

Acknowledgement

This syllabus benefited from comments and suggestions by Julian Erhardt and Martin Gross.