

Modeling Political Decisions for Sustainability

Fall 2022/23

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Purpose and Contents

This seminar will introduce students to the Predictioneer's Game, an applied model of multi-party decision-making. Subsequently, students will apply their modeling skills to specific political decisions on sustainability. The domain of application for the decision forecast is likely to be the buildup of forest carbon sinks and remunerating forest ecosystem services in Europe. The language of instruction is English. All papers will be written in English.

Learning Goals

Knowledge & Understanding

- background on political decision-making in medium-large actor settings,
- understand the core inputs & outputs of a prediction model, and
- decision-making on remunerating forest ecosystem services.

Applying, Analyzing & Evaluating

- undertake predictions of multi-actor negotiations for a hitherto unresolved challenge of sustainability policy,
- agree, among students and facilitated by the instructors, on standardized position input scales as relevant to utilizing a policy prediction software, and
- research, execute, and evaluate your own simulation model runs.

Competences

- Students develop their own research strategy amendable to using policy prediction tools, e.g., for subsequent use in their thesis as well as in a corporate or political context, and
- work individually as well as in groups on a diverse set of assignments.

Logistics

Time: →*Course Overview*

Location: See “Course Overview” below.

In case we employ Zoom, relevant information will be posted on
→Moodle.

Prerequisites: Master, M.A., M.S., or doctoral student status, or special student status in Political Science, Public Administration, MAIB, MPM, Business Administration, Economics, and HPI; exceptions at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Registration: →<https://puls.uni-potsdam.de>, Course: 431211
(you will be admitted to the waiting list).

Deadline for Dropping the Course: 10 Nov. 2022

Credit Points: 5/6 or 9/10 (ECTS)

Course website: Moodle →<https://moodle2.uni-potsdam.de/course/view.php?id=34119>

Capacity: 20

Contact Details:

detlef.sprinz@uni-potsdam.de (include “MPD4S Winter 2022” in the subject line)

www.sprinz.org

Office Hours: by appointment

Practicalities

This course may require usage of Zoom (in the beginning and in case we cannot continue to meet physically) and Moodle for our communication and interaction. In addition, we may use other digital tools. We will use Moodle for contents management (self-enrollment for students with a University of Potsdam account). In case we have to switch to Zoom, please consult →Moodle for relevant information. You will need a laptop with Windows PC to run the software (“Predictioneer’s Game”) for predicting negotiation outcomes.

In case we use Zoom, you will need a strong internet connection, a microphone, and a camera. Please make sure that your hardware avoids negative audio feedback; the use of headsets circumvents such problems. If you are not actively speaking, please mute your microphone. To preserve bandwidth, please switch off the video function if connectivity is weak, except when making an active contribution. For the latter, please also “raise hand” in Zoom (→participants), and “lower” your hand once you have spoken. In case we experience systemic problems with bandwidth (or you individually), please use the call-in (phone) function of Zoom (German call-in numbers at →Moodle if the University of Potsdam continues to subscribe to such services) and access the presentation files on →Moodle. We will also provide a brief guide to Zoom on →Moodle.

Code of Conduct

Given the current and potentially future health circumstances, please regularly update yourself on and follow the policies in force at the University of Potsdam (→<https://www.uni-potsdam.de>), the City of Potsdam (→<https://www.potsdam.de>), the State of Brandenburg (→<https://www.brandenburg.de>), and (in case you commute to the University of Potsdam from Berlin) the State of Berlin (→<https://www.berlin.de>). The instructor reserves the right to impose more stringent health policies.

In case we hold a session at PIK – Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, the hygiene concept of PIK will apply, in addition. No exceptions will be accepted.

Any communicable disease, incl. seasonal influenza, is unacceptable in the classroom. Please stay at home and seek professional medical advice.

All students are assumed to be familiar with and will abide by the rules of proper academic conduct as specified by the University of Potsdam (→<https://www.uni-potsdam.de/am-up/2011/ambek-2011-01-037-039.pdf>, English: →https://www.uni-potsdam.de/fileadmin/projects/studium/docs/03_studium_konkret/07_rechtsgrundlagen/plagiatsrichtlinie_EN.pdf; please also consult general obligations at <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/cogsci-students/studienplanung/gute-wissenschaftlicher-praxis-plagiarismus> (German) and <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/cogsci-students/organizing-your-studies/academic-code-of-conduct-plagiarism> (English)), and for courses offered jointly with other universities and academic programs, their rules apply in addition.

You are required to undertake all your individual assignments independently. For group assignments, resulting products shall be authored exclusively by all group members (with individual components clearly marked). Failure to comply with such rules may lead to the consequences stipulated on → <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/studium/konkret/rechtsgrundlagen/rahmenvorschriften-fuer-bachelor-master> (German only) (§17).

We expect you to respect the Code of Conduct of the University of Potsdam concerning digital courses (German: →https://www.uni-potsdam.de/fileadmin/projects/zim/files/UP_Code_of_Conduct_Videoaufzeichnungen.pdf; English: →https://www.uni-potsdam.de/fileadmin/projects/zim/files/UP_Code_of_Conduct_videoconference.pdf).

Each written submission in this course shall include page 2 of → https://www.uni-potsdam.de/fileadmin01/projects/wisofak/Dateien/Studium/informationen_f_r_studierende_plagiatssoftware_april_2014.pdf (German only; also available on the →Moodle website for this course).

During our seminar sessions, I expect you to concentrate solely on this course, not other activities.

All (personal) information and material that you encounter in conjunction with this course, in the classroom, on →Zoom, or on →Moodle shall be exclusively used for course-related purposes. As we may have a guest speakers and an issue of current politics as the domain of application, “Chatham House Rules” apply:

“When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed” (<https://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chatham-house-rule>, last accessed: 16 Oct. 2022).

Violation of the Chatham House Rule will be treated as academic misconduct.

You have to read the EULA (End User License Agreement) of the Predictioneer’s Game software, and you accept it automatically when submitting the simulation paper. You also automatically accept all rules of academic conduct for the entire course by submitting your first written assignment, whether this is a paper, written test, quiz, or similar.

Students are expected to attend all sessions. If you fall ill, please inform both the instructor with as much lead time as possible. In case you cannot submit assignments due to medical reasons, you must submit an appropriate medical certificate. In addition, in case you request accommodations (“Nachteilsausgleich”), please inform the instructors to this effect and provide the necessary documentation until 10 Nov. 2022 in writing.

In case observation of religious obligations interferes with academic deadlines, please notify the instructor well ahead of the deadlines.

Course Requirements and Grading

Students are expected to attend *all* classes and read *all* required readings *before* class so as to allow for informed discussions.

This course comprises a portfolio of assignments. Students receiving 5-6 ECTS will undertake the simulation paper and presentation as a *group* assignment; students wishing to receive 9-10 ECTS undertake the simulation paper and presentation as an *individual* assignment. Please inform the instructor how many ECTS you wish to receive by 10 Nov. 2022 before undertaking the simulation assignment.

<i>Requirements</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Fulfill tasks and tests on Moodle	20%
(Individual) actor paper	20%
(Individual) actor paper presentation	10%
(Group) simulation paper	35%
(Group) simulation paper presentation	15%

Course Overview¹

Module #	Date & Time	Topic	Learning goals students	Homework (in advance of the class meetings) & Activities
1	20 Oct. 2022, 8:30-10:00h, <i>via Zoom</i>	Course Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the goals and topic of the course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read detailed syllabus & admission policy Students prepare questions related to course
2	27 Oct. 2022, 8:30-10:00h, <i>via Zoom</i>	The Predictioneer's Game: Logic & Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic understanding of overall functions and functioning of the Predictioneer's Game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarize yourself with Moodle Watch a set of videos by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita (BdM) Readings according to syllabus Prepare questions
3	27 Oct. 2022, 10:20-11:50h, <i>via Zoom</i>	The Predictioneer's Game: Input Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed understanding of the input data (conceptual) Corona pandemic policy decision as conceptual example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch a set of videos by BdM Readings according to syllabus
4	03 Nov. 2022, 8:30-10:00h, 3.07.0.39	The Predictioneer's Game: Output Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed understanding of the output files (conceptual) Interpreting outputs Learn veto rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch a set of videos from BdM Readings according to syllabus Read centrally provided <i>output</i> files for Module 4
5	03 Nov. 2022, 10:20-	t.b.d.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

¹ The schedule is indicative and subject to short-term changes. Check the course site on Moodle for updates and announcements.

	11:50h, 3.07.0.39			
6	10 Nov. 2022, 8:30- 10:00h, 3.07.0.39	The Predictioneer's Game: Running the Software Quiz on the Predictioneer's Game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get Predictioneer's Game running ▪ Learn Veto Rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Install Predictioneer's Game prior to class ▪ Submit Predictioneer's Game input file to →Moodle ▪ Video on Veto Rule ▪ Readings according to syllabus ▪ In-Class Quiz
7	10 Nov. 2022, 10:20- 11:50h, 3.07.0.39		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪
8	17 Nov. 2022, 8:30- 10:00h, 3.07.0.39		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪
9	17 Nov. 2022, 8:30- 10:00h, 3.07.0.39		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
10 & 11	24 Nov. 2022, 8:30- 11:50h, 3.07.0.39	Presentation: Individual Actor Papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation ▪ Q&A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submission of actor papers and presentation files to →Moodle ▪ Watch other student's presentations & prepare questions for Q&A ▪ Submit general and project- specific questions →Moodle
12	1 Dec. 2022, 10:20-		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪

	11:50h, 3.07.0.39			
13	8 Dec. 2022, 10:20- 11:50h, 3.07.0.39		▪	▪
14	15 Dec. 2022, 09:00- 11:00h, 3.07.0.39	Presentation: Group Prediction Papers	▪	▪ Submit papers & video presentation to →Moodle
15	15 Dec. 2022, 11:15- 12:00h, 3.07.0.39	Course Review	▪	▪

Additional modules may be scheduled at the discretion of the instructor. Please check announcements on →Moodle for updates.

Textbook & Readings

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce. 2009. *The Predictioneer's Game: Using the Logic of Brazen Self-Interest to See and Shape the Future*. New York: Random House.

All other readings can be found on →*Moodle*.

Assignments

All Assignments

Assignments will be posted to →*Moodle* well ahead of the deadline. Submission deadlines are indicated on the →*Course Overview*.

Read the instructions carefully! All papers include your student ID number(s), assignment number (see overview), and word count on the first page. At a minimum, leave one inch margins from all four edges of A4-sized sheets. Footnotes shall be kept to a minimum. All text is 1.5-spaced, 11-12 point font (except for tables and graphs due to formatting). Paper length will be strictly enforced (the word count includes literally everything – no exceptions). Papers shall be submitted – in Word (check your word count!) **and** PDF format – via →*Moodle* by the due date and time (→*Assignment*). Extensions will be granted only under extraordinary circumstances, following written petition to the instructor.

For proper citation, please consult →<https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/using-sources> (English), <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/de/cogsci->

students/studienplanung/gute-wissenschaftlicher-praxis-plagiarismus (German), as well as <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/cogsci-students/organizing-your-studies/academic-code-of-conduct-plagiarism> (English).

In case of group assignments, all author ID numbers have to be listed, including a short description who contributed what.

In case you cannot submit assignments due to medical reasons, you must submit a medical doctor's certificate to the instructor.

The allocation of individual students to actor papers and to simulation groups is at the discretion of the instructor.

Assignments will be posted to →*Moodle* and are outlined below.

Actor and Simulation Papers & Presentations

Actor papers will be up to 1,000 words in length, simulation papers will be up to 2,000 words in length per group member. Details on the paper format and the submission procedure will be provided in the formal assignments. All papers and the presentation videos (if we have to revert to online teaching) are due the day prior to the presentation + Q&A session in class. Papers and presentation videos are submitted via →*Moodle*. Papers have to include student IDs and a brief description who did what (the latter refers only to group papers), the topic, and a word count on the cover page.

We will elaborate the relevant position scale for the prediction paper in class (Module 8), using working groups.

For the actor papers, please provide a brief historical overview of the actor, its central positions over time on the particular issue under investigation, and score the actor with respect to influence, position, salience, flexibility, veto status (as introduced in Modules 2-4, 6). Each of these scores has to be justified and sources fully referenced. Depending on health regulations, the presentation of the actor papers will take place either in person in the classroom or has to be produced as a video; it will be subject to Q&A by your peers (Modules 10-11). A guide how to create a video presentation using MS PowerPoint can be found on →*Moodle*. You may use the recording function of Zoom or other facilities instead.

For the simulation paper, you will have to determine which actors to include (beyond the actors already covered by actor papers), potentially revise the scores offered in individual actor papers, and devise a strategy for employing the Predictioneer's Game, including robustness checks (variations of the input structure, e.g., on parameters where point values cannot be reasonably or reliably ascertained). Please appendix the input file(s) for the simulations as .txt file(s) and provide full references for all sources.

Depending on health regulations, the presentation of the simulation papers will take place either in person in the classroom or has to be produced as a video; it will be subject to Q&A by your peers (Module 13). A guide how to create a video presentation using MS PowerPoint can be found on →Moodle. You may use the recording function of Zoom or other facilities instead.

Modules

Module 1: Course Overview

Course Overview

Module 2: The Predictioneer's Game: Logic & Overview

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce. 2009. *The Predictioneer's Game: Using the Logic of Brazen Self-Interest to See and Shape the Future*. New York: Random House, ch. 3

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce. 2010. Judging Judgment. *Critical Review* 22 (4):355-388. doi: 10.1080/08913811.2010.541686

Sprinz, Detlef F., Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Steffen Kallbekken, Frans Stokman, Håkon Sælen, and Robert Thomson. 2016. Predicting Paris: Multi-Method Approaches to Forecast the Outcomes of Global Climate Negotiations. *Politics and Governance* 4 (3):172-187. doi: 10.17645/pag.v4i3.654

Module 3: The Predictioneer's Game: Input Data

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce. 2009. *The Predictioneer's Game: Using the Logic of Brazen Self-Interest to See and Shape the Future*. New York: Random House, ch. 4

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce. 2011. A New Model for Predicting Policy Choices. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 28 (1):65-87. doi: 10.1177/0738894210388127

Module 4: The Predictioneer's Game: Output Data

Sprinz, Detlef F. and Bruce Bueno de Mesquita. 2015. Predicting Paris: Forecasting the Outcomes of UNFCCC COP-21 With the Predictioneer's Game. Potsdam and New York City: PIK - Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and New York University, doi: 10.13140/RG.2.1.3722.1840

Read output files for Module 4 (→Moodle).

Module 5: Guest Lecture: t.b.d.

Module 6: The Predictioneer's Game: Running the Software

Prepare an input file for the Predictioneer's Game based on
Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce. 2009. *The Predictioneer's Game: Using the Logic of Brazen Self-Interest to See and Shape the Future*. New York: Random House, 215-226

Purchase, download and install the Predictioneer's Game. Install and read all information, incl. "Excel Tools," "Sample Test Sets," "User Guide," FAQ, and the EULA

Read

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce. n.d. *The Predictioneer's Game*© Basic Software Training Manual. Retrieved from *The Predictioneer's Game (Software)*

In-Class Quiz

Note: The electronic quiz on Predictioneer's Game in Module 6 can only be accessed after having watched *all* audio and video files provided in preparation of Modules 2, 3 and 4. Please be aware and prepare accordingly in order to avoid any technical issues when the quiz is due during our session.

Module 7: t.b.d.

Module 8: Prediction: Developing the Scales

In-Class Exercise with preparatory Homework Assignment

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce. 2009. *The Predictioneer's Game: Using the Logic of Brazen Self-Interest to See and Shape the Future*. New York: Random House, ch. 5.

Module 9: Workshop: Q&A on Group Projects

Details to be announced on →Moodle

Modules 10 & 11: Presentation: Individual Actor Papers

Presentations: Individual Actor Papers

Module 14: Presentation: Group Prediction Papers

Presentation: Group or Individual Prediction Papers

Please read all sources on →Moodle, which may be updated on short notice

Module 15: Course Review