

Syllabus for the Bachelor's advanced seminar: "Researching the European Parliament: Actors, Preferences and Behaviour"

Summer semester 2024

Thursday, 15:15 – 16:45, D247

Bachelor's advanced seminar

English

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Office hours / D244 / Please email me.

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1. Seminar description

This seminar on the European Parliament provides an in-depth exploration of the only directly elected institution of the European Union. It offers students a comprehensive understanding of its functions, dynamics, and significance within EU governance. Through reading and discussing contemporary research, students will gain insights into the roles, preferences, and behaviours of various actors within the European Parliament, as well as their impact on EU decision-making processes. The course aims to foster an understanding of the diverse range of individual and collective actors within the European Parliament, such as individual Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), (shadow) rapporteurs, party groups, or committees, and to explore their preferences, motivations, and behaviours. The students will gain insight into how these actors influence EU policies and shape the direction of the European Union by studying their interactions and decision-making processes. The initial sessions of the seminar will provide students with a comprehensive overview of the European Parliament's institutional framework, functions, and powers, laying the groundwork for deeper exploration into specific aspects of its operations in subsequent sessions. A significant focus of the seminar will be on understanding the processes of preference formation and behaviour within the European Parliament, enabling students to analyse how individual preferences, party affiliations, and national interests intersect and influence legislative outcomes. Practical application of theoretical concepts will be emphasized through the assignments, enabling students to develop research questions, analyse datasets, and formulate empirical-analytical research designs related to the European Parliament. Overall, the seminar seeks to provide students with a nuanced understanding of the complexities of EU governance and decision-making processes. It equips them with the knowledge and analytical skills necessary to engage with contemporary European politics critically.

2. Learning objectives

This seminar will allow you to gain the following competences:

1. Research overview

Students acquire the ability to summarize existing research on a topic.

2. Theory development

Students are able to develop a theory.

3. Research design

Students are able to develop a research design.

4. Data collection and analysis

Students are able to collect and analyse data.

3. Recommended prior knowledge

Students are expected to have basic knowledge of Social Science methods and the European Union as acquired in lectures like International Relations and European Integration as well as Empirical Research Methods and/or Statistics. Basic knowledge of R (or another statistical software, e.g. Stata) is recommended, but not required.

4. Course requirements and assessment

Course-related performance assessment and components of the grade

The course-related performance assessment is comprised of the following 3 individual assessment components:

1. Term paper	75 %
2. Presentation	25 %
3. Exposé + Peer feedback	pass/fail

A performance assessment is passed if all relevant assessment components were passed with at least a 4.0. This means that you are obligated to successfully complete all 3 assessment components in order to pass the entire performance assessment. Individual components of a performance assessment cannot be repeated separately. Instead, the entire performance assessment has to be retaken.

Detailed description of the assessment components

1. Term paper

The term paper should not exceed a maximum of 5000 words and engage with a selected aspect of the topics discussed in class. The paper must include a theoretical argument and an empirical observation related to it. Thereby students will demonstrate their ability to critically analyse and synthesise scholarly literature, develop theoretical arguments, and apply empirical observations to support their claims. The term paper will provide students with an opportunity to showcase their understanding of the European Parliament and its role in the broader context of the European Union, as well as their proficiency in conducting independent research and academic writing.

2. Presentation

The students will present a dataset of their choosing. The dataset should facilitate research on the European Parliament. A list with examples will be available via Ilias. Should students wish to present a dataset not included in the list, they should consult me first. The presentation should introduce the dataset, display (potential) use cases and identify shortcomings or room for improvement.

3. Exposé + Peer feedback

The Exposé should be no longer than 3 pages and develop an interesting research question for your term paper. Furthermore, it should give an overview on the planned empirical-analytical research design, including theory, methods, and potential data sources. We will discuss the Exposés in the last session, and you are expected to act as a discussant for one of your classmates. If you cannot attend the last session, please let me know as early as possible so we can reschedule.

Regular attendance in the course

Regular attendance in the seminar is a prerequisite for successfully completing the course and acquiring the course credits. You can still fulfil the attendance requirements if you are absent for a maximum on 3 of the seminar dates. Students who miss more than 3 seminar sessions cannot meet the attendance requirement. Accordingly, participation in seminar assessments (component) is denied, irrespective of whether or not the student is responsible for the absences. In this case, neither a grade nor ECTS credits can be acquired.

In justified exceptional cases, a deviation from these regulations is possible; corresponding requests must be submitted to the secretary of the responsible examination board.

Registration deadline for examinations

If you want to take an exam in the seminar that should be credited to your studies, please remember to register the exam in ZEuS. The registration for the examination will take place in the following period: **1 May – 15 June.**

If the examination is taken without registration, the examination results will not be evaluated. A subsequent registration for the examination is not possible.

Important: Registration for the course does not replace the registration for the examination!

Further information: <https://www.polver.uni-konstanz.de/service/formalitaeten/pruefungen/pruefungsanmeldung/>.

Deadline for submission of seminar paper

The following deadline applies for the term paper: **15 September.**

The submission deadline is a cut-off deadline. Term papers submitted late will be graded with 5.0 (failed), unless the student is not responsible for missing the deadline.

The responsible examination board decides on the extension of the processing time for the term paper. This is how you proceed if you are not responsible for exceeding the deadline for one of the following reasons.

Extension of deadline due to illness

If you are sick during the processing time of the term paper, you must always report your illness **immediately in writing an e-mail** to the Examination Administration (pruefungsverwaltung.polver@uni-konstanz.de).

In the next step, a doctor of your choice must determine your inability to take the examination on the first day of illness and issue an appropriate attestation. If your family doctor is not available, please see another doctor. This is because attestation forms issued after the fact will not be accepted. Please note that only the form of the Central Examination Office can be accepted as a certificate. The form can be found on the department's website under Service and Advice → Study Organisation, Forms and Regulations.

The attestation form must be **completed, signed, and submitted to the Examination Office immediately**. You can either hand in the attestation in D349 or put it in the mailbox to the right of D349 or send it by house mail or regular mail (box 74). A **scan of the completed attestation form** should be sent in advance to the above mail address, especially if the sick note is issued a few days before the deadline for submission of the term paper.

Subsequently issued certificate forms will not be accepted. The processing period of the term paper will be extended by the period for which the certificate is valid.

Extension of deadline for another reason not attributable to the student himself/herself

An extension of the processing time for the term paper can also be approved in certain other exceptional cases, if students are not responsible for the reasons for their inability to complete the term paper. If such a case arises, please contact the Examination Office immediately and submit a request to the Examination Committee (the online form can be found on the department's website under Service and Advice → Study Organisation, Forms and Regulations), in

which you explain your reasons for being prevented in detail and attach any necessary supporting documents. The examination board will review your request and inform you whether it has been approved or rejected.

You will find all important information about extending the processing time under the following link:

<https://www.polver.uni-konstanz.de/service/formalitaeten/pruefungen/ruecktritt-krankmeldung-und-nachteilsausgleich/>.

Additional important information

- Preferred citation style: APA or Harvard Style (for notes see: <https://www.polver.uni-konstanz.de/service/wissenschaftliches-arbeiten/was-muss-ich-beim-schreiben-beachten/zitieren/>).
- Late assignments and missed deadlines will result in a 5,0.
- A declaration of independent work must be submitted for all texts that are handed in for examination (see point 5).

5. Guidelines for preventing plagiarism

Plagiarism in a written work, such as a term paper or thesis, constitutes the copying, paraphrasing or translating of another person's work including, for example, individual sentences or sentence parts, illustrations, data, models, ideas, hypotheses and arguments from books, journals, internet etc. without acknowledging and referencing the original source, thereby falsely claiming this intellectual work to be one's own. This is particularly important when using AI tools.

The department follows the rules of "good scientific practice" of the German Research Foundation and its own regulations on plagiarism. The department strictly and decisively penalizes any and all attempts at deception/plagiarism. In cases of serious violations, students may be sanctioned or even disqualified from repeating an academic performance assessment, thereby also losing the right to take examinations in the study programme, which in turn leads to exmatriculation.

You can find additional information on this topic on the department's homepage:

<https://www.polver.uni-konstanz.de/en/service/wissenschaftliches-arbeiten-20/was-muss-ich-beim-schreiben-beachten/plagiarism/>

Helpful information on the topic of academic work is also available on the department's homepage:

Department of Politics and Public Administration → Advice and Service → Academic Working

Please always attach the signed form **"Declaration of authorship"** to your written performance assessments.

Department of Politics and Public Administration → Advice and Service → Study Organisation, Forms and Regulations → Forms → General forms for all fields of study

6. Guidelines on the use of AI tools

The use of AI tools beyond purely formal, stylistic corrections and/or translations is not permitted.

General information on AI

Before using AI tools, familiarize yourself with the basic principles of how these tools work. For a first introduction:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwF-X5STYks>
- <https://www.uni-konstanz.de/lehren/weiterentwicklung-der-lehre/ki-in-der-lehre/>
- https://www.hs-mainz.de/fileadmin/Hochschule/Qualitaetsmanagement/Kompetenzzentrum/pdf/prompting_handreichung_05.pdf

Data protection

- Be careful with sensitive, personal data and new research results → Be aware of where your data is stored and what it can be used for. The university offers you alias email addresses: <https://www.kim.uni-konstanz.de/en/email-and-internet/university-email/additional-functions/temporary-email-addresses/>
- "Free" offers very often mean that your personal data will be used commercially.

7. Seminar plan

11.04.2024 First Session: Introduction

No mandatory readings

General background readings on the EU:

Lelieveldt, H. & Princen, S. (2023). *The Politics of the European Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hix, S. & Høyland, B. (2022). *The Political System of the European Union*. London: Bloomsbury.

De Vries, C. E., Hobolt, S., Proksch, S.-O., & Slapin, J. B. (2021). *Foundations of European Politics: A Comparative Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

General background readings on the EP:

Hix, S., Noury, A. G. & Roland, G. (2007). *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rittberger, B. (2005). *Building Europe's Parliament. Democratic Representation Beyond the Nation State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ringe, N. (2010). Who Decides, and How? Preferences, Uncertainty, and Policy Choice in the European Parliament. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

18.04.2024 Second Session: The European Parliament, its actors, and their role in the Ordinary Legislative Procedure

Mandatory readings:

Hix, S., & Høyland, B. (2013). Empowerment of the European Parliament. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16, 171-189.

Hamřík, L., & Kaniok, P. (2021). Who's in the Spotlight? The Personalization of Politics in the European Parliament. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 60(3), 673-701.

Optional readings:

Scully, R., & Farrell, D. M. (2003). MEPs as Representatives: Individual and Institutional Roles. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41(2), 269-288.

Dionigi, M. K. & Rasmussen, A. (2019). The Ordinary Legislative Procedure, *Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Politics*, 1-22.

25.04.2024 Third Session: Party groups and National delegations in the EP

Mandatory readings:

McElroy, G., & Benoit, K. (2010). Party Policy and Group Affiliation in the European Parliament. *British Journal of Political Science*, 40(2), 377-398.

Elomäki, A., Kantola, J., Ahrens, P., Berthet, V., Gaweda, B., & Miller, C. (2023). The role of national delegations in the politics of the European Parliament. *West European Politics*, 1-25.

Optional readings:

Rose, R. & Borz, G. (2013). Aggregation and representation in European Parliament party groups. *West European Politics*, 36(3), 474-497.

Costello, R. (2022). How does the composition of the European Parliament shape its role in EU decision-making? *Journal of European Public Policy*, 29(1), 117-135.

Hix, S., & Noury, A. (2018). Power versus Ideology: Political Group Switching in the European Parliament. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 43(4), 551-594.

02.05.2024 Fourth Session: Voting in the EP

Mandatory readings:

Meserve, S., Robbins, J., & Thames, F. (2017). Multiple Principals and Legislative Cohesion. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 42(4), 515-548.

Hix, S., Noury, A., & Roland, G. (2006). Dimensions of Politics in the European Parliament. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(2), 494-520.

Optional readings:

Costello, R., & Thomson, R. (2016). Bicameralism, nationality and party cohesion in the European Parliament. *Party Politics*, 22(6), 773-783.

Otjes, S., & van der Veer, H. (2016). The Eurozone crisis and the European Parliament's changing lines of conflict. *European Union Politics*, 17(2), 242-261.

Hix, S., Noury, A., & Roland, G. (2005). Power to the Parties: Cohesion and Competition in the European Parliament, 1979-2001. *British Journal of Political Science*, 35(2), 209-234.

Mühlböck, M. (2012). National versus European: Party Control over Members of the European Parliament. *West European Politics*, 35(3), 607-631.

Senninger, R., & Bischof, D. (2018). Working in unison: Political parties and policy issue transfer in the multilevel space. *European Union Politics*, 19(1), 140-162.

Willumsen, D. M. (2022). Policy preferences, unity, and floor dissent in the European Parliament. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 1-21.

09.05.2024 Ascension Day: No Session

16.05.2024 Fifth Session: EP committees and their key actors I

Mandatory readings:

Hurka, S. & Kaplaner, C. (2020). Are popular and powerful committees more representative? evidence from the ninth European Parliament. *Research & Politics*, 7(2), 1-9.

Yoshinaka, A., McElroy, G., & Bowler, S. (2012). The Appointment of Rapporteurs in the European Parliament. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 35(4), 457-486.

Optional readings:

Whitaker, R. (2019). A case of 'you can always get what you want'? Committee assignments in the European parliament. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 72(1), 162-181.

Yordanova, N. (2009). The rationale behind committee assignment in the European Parliament: Distributive, informational and partisan perspectives. *European Union Politics*, 10(2), 253-280.

Obholzer, L., Hurka, S., Kaeding, M., (2019). Party group coordinators and rapporteurs: Discretion and agency loss along the European Parliament's chains of delegation. *European Union Politics*, 20(2), 239-260.

Hurka, S., Kaeding, M. & Obholzer, L. (2015). Learning on the Job? EU Enlargement and the Assignment of (Shadow) Rapporteurships in the European Parliament. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 53(6). 1230-1247.

23.05.2024 Sixth Session: EP committees and their key actors II

Mandatory readings:

Costello, R. & Thomson, R. (2010). The policy impact of leadership in committees: rapporteurs' influence on the European Parliament's opinions. *European Union Politics*, 11(2), 219-240.

Häge, F. M. & Ringe, N. (2019). Rapporteur-shadow rapporteur networks in the European Parliament: the strength of small numbers. *European Journal of Political Research*, 58(1), 209-235.

Optional readings:

Thierse, S. (2019). Policy entrepreneurship in the European Parliament: reconsidering the influence of rapporteurs. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(2), 267-285.

Benedetto, G. (2005). Rapporteurs as legislative entrepreneurs: the dynamics of the codecision procedure in Europe's parliament. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12(1), 67-88.

Neuhold, C. & Settembri, P. (2009). Achieving consensus through committees: does the European Parliament manage. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 47(1), 127-151.

30.05.2024 Corpus Christi: No Session

06.06.2024 Seventh Session: The EP elections

Mandatory readings:

Hix, S. & Marsh, M. (2007). Punishment or Protest? Understanding European Parliament Elections. *Journal of Politics*, 69(2), 495-510.

Braun, D., & Schmitt, H. (2020). Different emphases, same positions? The election manifestos of political parties in the EU multilevel electoral system compared. *Party Politics*, 26(5), 640-650.

Optional readings:

Braun, D., & Grande, E. (2021). Politicizing Europe in Elections to the European Parliament (1994-2019): The Crucial Role of Mainstream Parties. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*.

Hix, S., & Marsh, M. (2011). Second-order effects plus pan-European political swings: An analysis of European Parliament elections across time. *Electoral Studies*, 30(1), 4-15.

Hobolt, S. & Wittrock, J. (2011). The second-order election model revisited: An experimental test of vote choices in European Parliament elections. *Electoral Studies*, 30(1), 29-40.

Wilson, S. L., Ringe, N., & van Thomme, J. (2016). Policy leadership and re-election in the European Parliament. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(8), 1158-1179.

13.06.2024 Eighth Session: Trilogues and Early Agreements in the Ordinary Legislative Procedure

Mandatory readings:

Roederer-Rynning, C. & Greenwood, J. (2015). The culture of trilogues. *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 22: 8, pp. 1148-1165.

Bressanelli, E., Koop, C., & Reh, C. (2016). The impact of informalisation: Early agreements and voting cohesion in the European Parliament. *European Union Politics*, 17(1), 91-113.

Optional readings:

Ripoll Servant, A. & Panning, L. (2019). Preparatory bodies as mediators of political conflict in trilogues: the European Parliament's shadows meetings. *Politics and Governance*, 7(3), 303-315.

Farrell, H. & Héritier, A. (2004). Interorganizational negotiation and intraorganizational power in shared decision making: early agreements under codecision and their impact on the European Parliament and council. *Comparative Political Studies*, 37(10), 1184-1212.

Delreux, T. & Laloux, T. (2018). Concluding Early Agreements in the EU: A Double Principal-Agent Analysis of Trilogue Negotiations. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(2), 300-317.

15.06.2024 Important: Deadline examination registration

20.06.2024 Important: No Session

27.06.2024 Ninth Session: Legislative speech and issue contestation in the EP + How to find a good research question for your term paper

Mandatory readings:

Meijers, M. J., & van der Veer, H. (2019). Issue Competition without Electoral Incentives? A Study of Issue Emphasis in the European Parliament. *Journal of Politics*, 81(4), 1240-1253.

Proksch, S.-O., & Slapin, J. B. (2010). Position Taking in European Parliament Speeches. *British Journal of Political Science*, 40(3), 587-611.

Optional readings:

Slapin, J.B. & Proksch, S.-O. (2010). Look who's talking: Parliamentary debate in the European Union. *European Union Politics*, 1(3), 333-357.

Proksch, S.-O., Lowe, W., Wäckerle, J. & Soroka, S. (2019). Multilingual Sentiment Analysis: A New Approach to Measuring Conflict in Legislative Speeches. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 44, 97-131.

04.07.2024 Important: No Session

05.07.2024 Important: Exposé due on ILIAS

09.07.2024 Tenth Session: Legislative oversight in the EP

Mandatory readings:

Proksch, S.-O. & Slapin, J.B. (2010). Parliamentary questions and oversight in the European union: Parliamentary questions and oversight in the European union. *European Journal of Political Research*, 50(1), 53-79.

Jensen, C.B., Proksch, S.-O. & Slapin, J.B. (2013). Parliamentary Questions, Oversight, and National Opposition Status in the European Parliament. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 38(2), 259-82.

Optional readings:

Maricut-Akbik, A. (2021). Q&A in legislative oversight: A framework for analysis. *European Journal of Political Research*, 60(3), 539-559.

Font, N. & Pérez Durán, I. (2016). The European Parliament oversight of EU agencies through written questions. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(9), 1349-1366.

Raunio, T. (1996). Parliamentary questions in the European parliament: Representation, information and control. *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 2(4), 356-382.

11.07.2024 Eleventh Session: The role of lobbying and parliamentary staff

Mandatory readings:

Judge, A., & Thomson, R. (2019). The responsiveness of legislative actors to stakeholders' demands in the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 26(5), 676-695.

Pegan, A. (2017). The role of personal parliamentary assistants in the European Parliament. *West European Politics*, 40(2), 295-315.

Optional readings:

Marshall, D. (2010). Who to lobby and when: institutional determinants of interest group strategies in European Parliament committees. *European Union Politics*, 11(4), 553-575.

Marshall, D. (2015). Explaining Interest Group Interactions with Party Group Members in the European Parliament: Dominant Party Groups and Coalition Formation. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 53(2), 311-329.

Egeberg, M., Gornitzka, A., Trondal, J. & Johannessen M. (2013). Parliament staff: unpacking the behaviour of officials in the European Parliament. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 20(4), 495-514.

16.07.2024 Twelfth Session: The EP's role in EU agenda-setting

Mandatory readings:

Kreppel, A. & Webb, M. (2019). European Parliament resolutions-effective agenda setting or whistling into the wind? *Journal of European Integration*, 41(3), 383-404.

Kostadinova, P. & Giurcanu, M. (2019). Europarties' election pledges and European Commission legislative priorities: An assessment of their overlap. *Party Politics*, 26(6), 795-806.

Optional readings:

Webb, M., & Kreppel, A. (2020). The European Parliament's role as an informal EU agenda setter: The influence of own initiative reports. *Public Administration*, 99(2), 304-320.

Giurcanu, M. & Kostadinova, P. (2022). A responsive relationship? Setting the political agenda in the European Union. *Journal of European public policy*, 29(9), 1474-92.

Zwaan, P., van Voorst, S., & Mastenbroek, E. (2016). Ex post legislative evaluation in the European Union: questioning the usage of evaluations as instruments for accountability. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 82(4), 674-693.

18.07.2024 Thirteenth Session: Discussion of Exposé and Q&A for term paper

Mandatory readings: The Exposés of your classmates

15.09.2024 Important: Term paper due on ILIAS

8. Support offered by the University of Konstanz

General support

- Advice at the Central Student Advisory Centre: <https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/study/advice-and-services/central-student-advisory-service/zsb/>
- Writing tutoring service at the Writing Centre: <https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/writing-centre/>
- Psychological counselling at the Psychotherapeutic Counselling Centre (PBS): <https://seezeit.com/en/advice/psychotherapeutic-counselling/>
- Studying in Asylum at the RGFD: <https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/equalopportunities/diversity/programmes-and-measures/study-as-a-refugee/>
- Studying in Asylum at the International Office: <https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/international-office/study-in-konstanz/degree-studies/>
- Studying with a disability or chronic illness: <https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/study/study-essentials/studying-with-a-disability-or-chronic-illness/>
- Studying with children: <https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/equalopportunities/family/studying-with-children/>
- Financial worries → Seezeit Social Counselling: <https://seezeit.com/en/advice/social-counselling/>

Note on exam anxiety

Many students struggle with exam anxiety and I take this topic very seriously. Please let me know if this is an issue for you. I would also like to point you to the official help by the university.

Support in case of discrimination

The University of Konstanz is explicitly against any form of discrimination and offers several offices that can help you. Under the following link you will find an overview.

Contact persons for complaints in cases of discrimination:
<https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/equalopportunities/diversity/anti-discrimination/contact-persons/>

Academic adjustments in case of disability, impairment or chronic disease

Students with disabilities and chronic illnesses have the right to claim academic adjustments for coursework and performance assessments in the sense of inclusive participation. Information on this can be found under the following links:

<https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/study/study-essentials/studying-with-a-disability-or-chronic-illness/academic-adjustments/>

<https://www.polver.uni-konstanz.de/service/formalitaeten/pruefungen/ruecktritt-krank-meldung-und-nachteilsausgleich/>

If you require support in order to ensure your success in my course, please feel free to contact me. I'll gladly make reasonable accommodation, such as wearing a microphone for students with hearing disabilities.

Studying with children

According to the Higher Education Act, the University must provide flexible study for students with children and relatives in need of care. Information can be found under the link to the Student-Parent Pass:

<https://www.uni-konstanz.de/en/equalopportunities/family/studying-with-children/the-studierende-eltern-pass-step/2-legal-provisions/>

Please contact your department's advisor who can help you implementing these measures.

I explicitly support students with children. If you have problem obtaining child care during the course, you can bring your children into the seminar. Please chose a seat near to the exit so that you can take the child outside if needed in order to that the seminar can continue without interruption.