

Political Parties

Code: 101072
 ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
2500259 Political Science and Public Management	OT	3	2
2500259 Political Science and Public Management	OT	4	0

The proposed teaching and assessment methodology that appear in the guide may be subject to changes as a result of the restrictions to face-to-face class attendance imposed by the health authorities.

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Use of Languages

Principal working language: spanish (spa)
 Some groups entirely in English: No
 Some groups entirely in Catalan: No
 Some groups entirely in Spanish: No

Prerequisites

R e c o m m e n d a t i o n s

The student is advised to follow the treatment of certain current political issues in a habitual manner throughout the development of the subject, through different means of communication (written and audiovisual), in order to be able to easily follow the different debates, questions and approaches that may arise in class. Likewise, in order to make the most of this subject, it is recommended that students have basic computer skills (word processing, graphic presentations, Internet browsing and obtaining information), as well as the Virtual Campus of the U A B . It is necessary to have an intermediate level of English, which allows the student to broaden the scope of the information that can be consulted, such as research, news and bibliography written in English.

O b s e r v a t i o n s .

No electronic device may be used in class, neither to communicate nor to take notes. Computers, tablets and mobiles are prohibited in the classroom.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The course introduces the student to political parties and electoral systems - crucial political institutions of modern democracies - in an ambitious way, going beyond a simple catalogue that classifies different 'species', as the classical institutionalist approaches had tended to do. This subject begins by modeling the functioning of political parties in electoral systems, building on the basic assumptions of rational choice and spatial models of electoral competition. It advances incorporating complexity and realism in the functioning of political parties and electoral systems from the study of the political-ideological dimensions and of the political system itself. As a whole, this strategy allows to incorporate in the study of political parties, electoral systems and political systems elements of explanation, causality and prediction, which characterize modern empirical science. The description, understanding and analysis of the main characteristics of political parties and electoral systems.

The objectives will be the following:

To know a basic analytical instrument to study the functioning of political parties and political systems.
To analyze the diverse strategies of electoral competition.
To know the rules of the electoral game and its effects on the constitution of parliaments and the formation of governments.

To recognise the different types of political parties and party systems (in general and in relation to the Spanish case).

Understand the historical origin of political parties and party systems.

Competences

Political Science and Public Management

- Analysing the behaviour of the political actors, both individually and collectively (parties, interest groups, social movements, etc.).
- Analysing the electoral processes, including campaigns, parties' electoral strategies, political scenarios and analysis and interpretation of electoral results.
- Arguing from different theoretical perspectives.
- Demonstrating good writing skills in different contexts.
- Demonstrating the comprehension of citizen behaviour and democratic values, particularly in internal or international concrete cases.
- Explaining political, individual and collective attitudes and behaviours, as well as the education process and expression of political preferences.
- Identifying and distinguishing the functioning of the electoral processes.
- Identifying main actors of the political system, inspecting their interactions and assessing their behaviour in their environment and in the political system from a theoretical and practical perspective.
- Identifying sources of data and conducting bibliographic and documentary searches.
- Interpreting and applying English texts in an academic way.
- Managing the available time in order to accomplish the established objectives and fulfil the intended task.
- Managing the different theoretical contributions about actors and actor's networks, as well as the characteristics of collective action.
- Realising effective oral presentations that are suited to the audience.
- Showing a good capacity for transmitting information, distinguishing key messages for their different recipients.
- Synthesizing and critically analysing information.
- Using the main information and documentation techniques (ICT) as an essential tool for the analysis.
- Working autonomously.
- Working by using quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques in order to apply them to research processes.
- Working in teams and networking, particularly in interdisciplinary conditions.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analysing the behaviour of the political actors, both individually and collectively (parties, interest groups, social movements, etc.).
2. Analysing the electoral processes, including campaigns, parties' electoral strategies, political scenarios and analysis and interpretation of electoral results.
3. Arguing from different theoretical perspectives.
4. Demonstrating good writing skills in different contexts.
5. Explaining political, individual and collective attitudes and behaviours, as well as the education process and expression of political preferences.
6. Identifying and distinguishing the functioning of the electoral processes.
7. Identifying main actors of the political system, inspecting their interactions and assessing their behaviour in their environment and in the political system from a theoretical and practical perspective.
8. Identifying sources of data and conducting bibliographic and documentary searches.
9. Interpreting and applying English texts in an academic way.
10. Managing the available time in order to accomplish the established objectives and fulfil the intended task.

11. Managing the different theoretical contributions about actors and actor's networks, as well as the characteristics of collective action.
12. Realising effective oral presentations that are suited to the audience.
13. Showing a good capacity for transmitting information, distinguishing key messages for their different recipients.
14. Synthesizing and critically analysing information.
15. Using the main information and documentation techniques (ICT) as an essential tool for the analysis.
16. Working autonomously.
17. Working by using quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques in order to apply them to research processes.
18. Working in teams and networking, particularly in interdisciplinary conditions.

Content

1.	Introduction:	theory	and	methodology
2.	The	spatial		model
3.	The	multidimensional		space
4.				Elections
5.	Electoral		institutions	(Y)
6.	Electoral		Institutions	(II)
7.	Matches	and	match	systems
8.	The	formation	of	party systems
9.	System	of parties	to the	Spanish State
10.	Electoral institutions, party systems and governance			

The introductory chapter presents three general characteristics of the rational approach applied to politics: First, it explains the way rationality is understood in decision-making; second, the construction of explanations of political phenomena through formal models; and finally, the way to convert the hypotheses raised by political theories into empirical research.

In the first block (chapters 2 to 4), the spatial models are presented, progressing towards a greater realism and complexity of the models. The first two chapters focus on applications of the spatial model to decision-making in a committee. Chapter 2 introduces the one-dimensional spatial model, the utility functions of the members. The main result is the median voter theorem. Chapter 3 presents the utility functions in multidimensional spaces and the effect it has on the difficulty of obtaining equilibrium results. Finally, chapter 4 deals with the spatial models applied to the electorates and makes predictions for the position of the candidates in the political-ideological space. It considers variations in the assumptions of the model. Taking into account a competition with only two parties or candidates, it considers, in the first place, if the objectives that the candidates try to achieve in the elections can only be to obtain the position (without worrying about the policies that they will carry out) or ideological. The level of information that candidates have about voter preferences and their reputation among voters also affects the kind of trade-offs that can be achieved.

A second block (chapters 5 and 6) focuses on electoral systems. Chapter 5 explains the constituent elements of any electoral system: the types of votes, the requirements to candidates, the magnitude of the districts, the electoral formulas and the electoral threshold. Chapter 6 examines the political consequences of electoral systems. Duverger's Laws and the Strategic Vote.

The third block (chapters 7, 8 and 9) focuses on parties and party systems. Chapter 7 deals with the emergence of political parties as necessary instruments to achieve coordination between political representatives both to parliamentary institutions and as the electoral arena to mobilize voters. The different organizational forms of the parties (parties of notables, masses and cadres) will respond to changes in the characteristics of the environment (especially the growth of the electorate). This chapter introduces the analytical tools that are used to study the elements of party systems: the number of parties and the political-ideological or cleavages dimensions. Finally, the role of party organizations in solving problems of collective action in the mobilization of the electorate is discussed. Chapter 8 explains the formation of the different party systems from the mobilizations of the different social and economic cracks. Chapter 9 applies the analytical contents developed in the bloc to the case of the party system to the Spanish state.

Finally, chapter 10 focuses on how the political parties that are born from the electoral rules and the preferences of the electorates influence the governments that are formed and governability. The longevity of the executives and the criteria in the formation of government coalitions are studied.

Methodology

The methodology of study and evaluation of the subject will use a varied set of instruments to achieve an optimal knowledge of the contents of the subject. On the one hand, there will be continuous evaluation exercises consisting of critical reviews of scientific articles, problem solving, exercises, or case studies. Discussions on current issues will also be raised in the debate space to apply the analytical instruments of the subject.

The teaching of the subject will be organized in 4 learning units that follow the main blocks of the subject.

The first corresponds to the contents of the first introductory chapter of the rational approach to political science and to the three chapters that develop the spatial model in the committees and in the elections. The second didactic unit will deal with the chapters corresponding to electoral systems (chapters 5 and 6). The third unit will be devoted to the chapters corresponding to parties and party systems (chapters 7 to 8). Finally, the fourth didactic unit will deal with the chapter corresponding to the Spanish political system (chapter 9) and the chapter dedicated to the formation and stability of governments, and their impact on the elaboration of public policies (chapter 10).

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Acquisition and development of basic knowledge guided by the professor	60	2.4	1, 7, 6, 17
Type: Supervised			
Use of acquired concepts	7	0.28	3, 6, 14, 18
Type: Autonomous			
Study and presentation of results	75	3	4, 10, 8, 9, 16, 15

Assessment

The evaluation of this subject consists of the following parts:

Attendance and participation. In addition to the obligatory nature of attendance, the attitude of those students capable of relating the different currents of thought and theoretical-conceptual approaches of the subject with the different current political and social topics will be especially appreciated. A final exam, composed of four short questions with a value of 1.5 points each and a question to be developed with a value of 4 points. Four practical exercises that will consist of cases on the theory studied... A coursework on a topic that will be chosen jointly by the teacher and the student.

There are some particularly remarkable considerations about the conditions of the evaluation system:
 - The date of the exam will be the one marked by the faculty. Under no circumstances will particular exams be held. Erasmus students who buy their return tickets before the final exam and therefore do not take it will be considered as not having taken the exam.

- It is a necessary condition to pass the subject pass the final exam with a minimum grade of passed.
- All deliveries will be made via the Virtual Campus in the specific space set aside for this purpose. Any delivery out of time or place will be considered as not presented.
- When the evaluation activities carried out by the student exceed 30%, the student will no longer be able to request a no-show.
- All oral or written activities will be carried out in Catalan or Spanish.
- Finally, if any type of plagiarism is detected in the performance of some of the planned activities, especially in the performance of the work (repetition of work in other years, websites, books, etc.), the subject will be suspended globally and will have to be repeated in its entirety.

R e c o v e r y

In order to participate in remedial work, students must have been previously evaluated in a set of activities, the weight of which is equivalent to a minimum of two thirds of the total grade of the subject or module.

In order to participate in the remedial process of the course, the student must have obtained a minimum grade of 3.5 in the average of the course.

Make-up work will consist of handing in, before the make-up exam, all the work not done in time and form during the school semester. Subsequently, an exam of the same characteristics as the final exam of the course will be taken.

Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Attendance and participation	10%	3	0.12	1, 3, 7, 8, 6, 17, 15
Continuous evaluation exercises	40%	1	0.04	1, 3, 4, 10, 7, 8, 6, 9, 14, 17, 16, 18, 15
Final Exam	30%	1.5	0.06	1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 7, 6, 14, 17, 16
essays	20%	2.5	0.1	1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 5, 12, 10, 7, 8, 6, 9, 13, 14, 17, 16, 18, 15

Bibliography

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