

Comparative Politics

Code: 106203
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
2504216 Contemporary History, Politics and Economics	OB	3	1

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject. Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2023.

Teachers

Martha Ogochukwu Dennis

Prerequisites

The course 'Political Institutions' taught within the same Bachelor is a pre-requirement.

Although no specific test of English proficiency level is required to access the course, a B2 level of English of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is recommended.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The course has the main objective of introducing students to the comparative politics subject and its main issues/challenges based on a global focus (that is, combining both European and extra-European contexts).

First, it aims at familiarising students with the comparative method/logic as a strategy for understanding the political reality.

Secondly, it aims at deepening students' knowledge of standard concepts and classifications in the field of comparative politics (such as political regimes, party systems, electoral laws, types and patterns of voting behavior and political participation, etc.)

Thirdly, it aims at clarifying how comparative strategies can be used to find causal relationships between (that is, 'explain') political phenomena.

Competences

- Explain and summarise knowledge acquired in English language at an advanced level.
- Explain the structure and functioning of the European Union, its main institutions, political actors and means of integration.
- Manage and apply data to solve problems.
- Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
- Work cooperatively in multidisciplinary and multicultural teams implementing new projects.

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate capacity to adapt to changing environments.
2. Demonstrate initiative and the capacity to work autonomously when the situation requires.
3. Demonstrate the capacity for oral and written communication at an advanced level of English using complex concepts.
4. Demonstrate the capacity for oral and written communication in Catalan, Spanish and English which allows the work to be summarised and presented orally and in writing.
5. Demonstrate the capacity to continue working in the future autonomously gaining a deeper understanding of the knowledge acquired or embarking on new areas of knowledge.
6. Lead multidisciplinary and multicultural teams, implement new projects, coordinate, negotiate and manage conflicts.
7. Make decisions in situations of uncertainty and show an enterprising and innovative spirit.
8. Organise work in relation to good time management and planning.
9. Select and generate the information necessary for each problem, analyse it and make decisions accordingly.
10. Understand the agents of the economic environment and the dynamics of interaction between private agents, local, national and supranational institutions in an international context.

Content

The course is structured into three main sections. Further details related to each subsection will be provided in the course Syllabus:

1) 'COMPARING' AND 'POLITICS': WHAT RELATIONSHIP?

- Building the context: politics and its actors
- The importance of a 'comparative approach' for the study of politics
- Logics of comparisons: an overview

2) COMPARING AS 'MAPPING' THE POLITICAL WORLD: CATEGORIES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

- Country level: Political regimes, party systems, electoral systems, et al.
- Meso level: Political parties, social movements, interest groups, et al.
- Individual level: types of political participation, voting behaviour, et al.

2) BETWEEN CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES: COMPARING TO EXPLAIN POLITICAL PHENOMENA

- Country level: democratization, autocratization, party system polarisation, et al.
- Meso level: Patterns of party competition, party rhetoric, candidate selection, et. al.

- Individual level: public opinion, political attitudes, electoral preferences, et al.

Methodology

The course is composed of two types of sessions: lectures and practical seminars. Lectures will be devoted to the introduction and discussion of the course contents. Practical seminars will instead be devoted to group presentations of selected readings, followed by comments, (participative) discussions and practical examples provided by the professors. All students are expected to read the scheduled readings for each seminar and to participate in discussions.

During the practical seminars, students will also be given an overview of existing practical tools and concrete data sources for comparative political analysis.

Overall, the course methodology relies on the combination of following elements:

Directed activities:

- Lectures by the teaching team
- Insights and practical examples of comparative political analysis provided during the seminars
- Seminars: presentations and discussions of readings, comments and debates

Supervision:

- Support/feedback to analytical understanding of scientific readings in view of group presentations
- Individual and group support/feedback to papers writing
- Individual and group follow up on course contents in view of final exam

Autonomous activities:

- Readings: scientific articles and book chapters
- Individual study
- Writing papers and preparing presentations following the guidelines provided by the instructors

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	33	1.32	3, 5, 8, 9
Type: Supervised			
Tutoring	16.5	0.66	3, 5, 2, 8
Type: Autonomous			
Individual/group work and study	75	3	1, 3, 5, 2, 8, 7, 9

Assessment

The evaluation for this course is as follows:

- Option 1: continuous assessment

- Final exam: 50% of the grade.
- Group presentations of readings: 25% of the grade
- Course paper: 25% of the grade (authored by small groups of students based on a list of possible topics).

- Option 2: single assessment

- Exam: 50% of the grade (questions based on list of readings selected from the bibliography by the teaching team).
- Written comments to a reading (selected from the bibliography by the teaching team): 20% of the grade
- Individual paper: 30% of the grade (based on a list of topics proposed by the teaching team).

Regarding the continuous assessment:

During each practical seminar, small groups of students will be in charge of presenting a compulsory reading, followed by a short debate session with the other attendants. Each presentation, to be held preferably in English, will be aimed at presenting and discussing the reading systematically and will be based on a ppt. file that will be submitted to the teaching team at least 1 day in advance. Presenters will also have to include 2/3 open questions regarding their topic to start the debate with/among the audience. The evaluation will focus on presentation clarity, effectiveness in engaging with the article and relevant literature, understanding of the results/findings presented in the reading and the relevance of their open questions. Students not showing up at their scheduled presentation will receive a 5-point penalty on their grade for this part. The duration of the presentations, as well as composition and size of each group, will be decided once the final and official list of attendants becomes available. Presentation significantly shorter or longer than the expected threshold will receive a penalization. All students are expected to prepare the readings and actively contribute to the discussions in class. Presentations of the readings on the date scheduled are mandatory. Groups not presenting when scheduled will receive a 5-point penalization for that part of their score. The same penalization applies to individual students not showing up/joining their group on the day of the presentation, unless they are duly justified.

By the end of the course, students will prepare a group paper choosing from a list of possible titles/topics that will be made available by the teaching team at the beginning of the course. The papers will have to present a clear and well-defined research question and try to answer it by following a comparative strategy on the basis of the notions learned during the lectures and relevant literature. The papers will generally have the following structure: abstract, introduction (explaining contents and relevance of the research question), research hypotheses/expectations section, discussion based on examination of extant studies and findings, conclusions and list of bibliographic references (at least three references to books, books/book chapters/scientific articles must be included). Elaboration and discussion of external data sources (introduced during lectures and seminars) to explore the hypotheses is optional. Papers must have a minimum of 5000 words and a maximum of 6000 words, excluding references. Papers must be written in English and submitted to the professors by the indicated deadline. Papers submitted after the deadline will receive a 1-point penalty per each day of delay. Plagiarism and the use of artificial intelligence will not be tolerated under any circumstances. It is NOT possible to submit papers that have been prepared for other courses or for the thesis.

At the end of the classes, students will take a final exam. The test, in English language, will include 25 multiple-choice questions about the topics presented during the course.

In case of assessment retakes, the same evaluation method described above will apply.

Regarding the single assessment:

Students opting for this evaluation mode, will have to do the following:

- Submit a written commentary in English (min. 1500; max 3000 words, excluding references) concerning a reading they can choose among those selected by the teaching team (20%)
- Submit an individual paper in English choosing from a list of possible titles/topics (min. 3000; max. 4000 words, excluding references). In terms of paper structure, deadline rules, etc. same rules of the group paper for continuous evaluation apply (30%)
- Take a final exam (25 multiple-choice questions). The contents of the exam, in English, will be based on a list of readings selected from the course's extended bibliography that will be made available to students by the teaching team (50%)

In case of exam retakes, the same evaluation method described above for single assessment will apply.

The detailed schedule of the course will be carried out on the first day of class. At the beginning of the course, the teaching team will also inform about the dates of the continuous and single assessments.

Other important considerations:

Students will be graded with a numeric grade ranging from 0 to 10, with 10 being the best grade.

Students are required to attend at least at 80% of the sessions in order to pass this module.

For each type of assessment (continuous or single), the course cannot be passed without taking part in each of the three respective evaluation steps. In case of 'continuous' assessment, if a student has not contributed to a presentation during the course, he/she will not take the exam.

Passing the final exam is a necessary requirement for passing the course.

The lecturers will provide further details and information about the evaluation process during the presentation of the module.

On carrying out each evaluation activity, the lecturers will inform students (on Moodle) of the procedures to be followed for reviewing all grades awarded, and the date on which such a review will take place.

Students will obtain a Not assessed/Not submitted course grade unless they have submitted more than 1/3 of the assessment items.

In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

Exams where there have been irregularities (e.g. plagiarism, unauthorized use of AI, etc.) cannot be retaken.

Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Final exam	50	1.5	0.06	10, 5, 2, 8
Group paper	25	14	0.56	3, 5, 4, 6, 8, 7, 9
Presentation of readings	25	10	0.4	1, 3, 4, 9

Bibliography

The core readings for this course are the following (a detailed bibliography for each session will be available in the Syllabus before the beginning of the course):

Eder, C., Mochmann, I. C., & Quandt, M. (2014). *Political trust and disenchantment with politics: International perspectives*. Brill

Hislope, R., & Mughan, A. (2012). *Introduction to Comparative Politics: The State and Its Challenges*. Cambridge University Press.

Klingemann, H. D. (Ed.). (2009). *The comparative study of electoral systems*. Oxford University Press.

Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschier, S., & Frey, T. (2008). *West European politics in the age of globalization*. Cambridge University Press.

Landman, T., & Carvalho, E. (2016). *Issues and methods in comparative politics: an introduction*. Taylor & Francis.

Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2019). *Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*. Cambridge University Press.

Siaroff, A. (2022). *Comparing political regimes: A thematic introduction to comparative politics*. University of Toronto Press.

van der Eijk, C. (2018). *The Essence of Politics*. Amsterdam University Press.

Software

Not applicable.