

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

Contact

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Teachers

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

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 contents are structured into three main sections. Further details related to each subsection will be provided in the course syllabus:

PART 1. COMPARATIVE METHOD: AN INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Why Compare? The Importance of Context for Truly Understanding Politics
- 1.2 Comparing in Political Studies: When, How, and What?
- 1.3 Challenges and Limitations of the Comparative Method

PART 2. MACRO-LEVEL ANALYSIS

- 2.1 Political Regimes and Their Consequences: An Overview
- 2.2 Dynamics of Political Regimes: Transitions, (De)consolidation, and Setbacks
- 2.3 Electoral Rules, Forms of Government, and Their Effects
- 2.4 Mapping the 'Quantity' and 'Quality' of Party Systems
- 2.5 Stability vs. Change in Party Systems: A Review of Factors
- 2.6 Beyond the "Country Focus": Transnational and Subnational Examples of Comparative Research

PART 3. MESO-LEVEL: COMPARING POLITICAL ACTORS

3.1 Mapping Political Parties: Types and Profiles

3.2 Characteristics and Behavior of Parties across Short and Long-Term Factors

3.3 Opening the 'Black Box' of Parties: Comparing Party Members, Candidates, and Representatives

3.4 Beyond Electoral Politics: Protest Actors, Social Movements, and Special Interest Groups

PART 4. ATTITUDES AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

4.1 Political Attitudes/Public Opinion in Comparative Perspective

4.2 Electoral Participation: A Review of Short and Long-Term Factors

4.3 Explaining Party Choice in Comparative Perspective

4.4 Non-Electoral Political Participation and Its Drivers

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	33	1.32	3, 5, 8, 9
Type: Supervised			
Tutoring	15	0.6	2, 3, 5, 8
Type: Autonomous			
Individual/group work and study	82.5	3.3	1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9

The course consists of two types of sessions: lectures and practical seminars. Lectures will focus on introducing and discussing the course content. On the other hand, practical seminars will involve presentations of selected empirical research by the teaching team, followed by debates among small groups of students on the concerned readings. It is expected that all students read the assigned readings for each seminar and participate actively.

During the course, participants will also receive an overview of existing practical tools and specific data sources for comparative political analysis.

Overall, the course methodology is based on a combination of the following elements:

Guided Activities:

- Lectures by the teaching team
- Presentation of specific examples of comparative research during seminars
- Moderation of presentations and debates among small groups of students

Supervision:

- Support/feedback on analytical understanding of scientific readings for mid-term and/or final exams

- Support/feedback on the creation of analytical commentaries, both for preparation of debates (continuous assessment) and for the creation of short written commentaries (single assessment)

Independent Activities:

- Readings: scientific articles and book chapters
- Individual study
- Preparation of analyses and commentaries on specific readings to be presented in seminars and debates or in the form of written commentaries, depending on the selected mode of participation (continuous or single assessment, respectively)

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.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Debate competition	20	16.5	0.66	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Final exam	40	1.5	0.06	2, 5, 8, 9, 10
Mid-term exam	40	1.5	0.06	2, 5, 8, 9, 10

The evaluation for this course is as follows:

Option 1: continuous assessment

- Mid-term exam (multiple choice questions): 40% of the grade.
- Debate competition on a scientific article: 20% of the grade.
- Final exam (multiple choice questions): 40% of the grade.

Option 2: single assessment

- Final exam (multiple-choice questions): 40% of the grade.
- Oral exam (three open-ended questions chosen randomly from a predefined list by the teaching team): 30% of the grade.
- Critical commentary on a randomly selected text from a predefined list by the teaching team (1 page): 30% of the grade

Regarding the continuous assessment:

Students will take a mid-term exam and a final exam. The tests, in English, will include multiple-choice questions on the topics covered during the course.

During each practical seminar, small groups of students will conduct a debate session on a scientific article to promote a deep understanding and critical analysis of the discussed analysis. The session will begin with an introduction by the teaching team. During this time, the teaching team will provide a brief overview of the article, highlighting its main arguments and context. After the introduction, Group 1 will have 15 minutes to present the main points of the article. Their presentation will emphasize the strengths and contributions of the article, using visual aids (PowerPoint) to enhance clarity and interest. Next, Group 2 will have 15 minutes to present their critical analysis of the article. They will point out any weaknesses, gaps, or counterarguments, also using visual aids to support their critique and make their points more convincing.

After the initial presentations, Group 1 will have 10 minutes for the rebuttal.

The session will continue with a general debate segment, where the audience, including other students and faculty members, will be given the floor. This will encourage interaction between the presenting groups and the audience, allowing for a deeper exploration of the topics raised during the presentations.

Finally, the session will conclude with assessment and feedback from the teaching team. The teaching team will score the presentations based on criteria such as clarity, depth of analysis, persuasiveness, and participation.

This structured approach ensures a comprehensive and engaging debate session, promoting critical thinking, effective communication, and active participation by all students.

For those who do not pass the continuous assessment, the retake exam will consist of a general multiple-choice exam followed by a presentation with a question and answer session with the examining faculty on a randomly selected paper from a list of options predetermined by the teaching team.

Regarding the single assessment:

Students opting for this evaluation mode will be required to complete the following assessments on the same exam date:

- Final exam (multiple-choice questions), based on the course content discussed in its entirety.
- Writing a critical commentary (1 page) on a scientific article, also randomly selected from a predefined list provided by the teaching team weeks before the exam.
- Oral exam, consisting of 3 open-ended questions selected from a predefined list of topics provided by the teaching team weeks before the exam.

For those who do not pass the single assessment, the exam recovery will consist of repeating the same exam format.

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.

There is the possibility of retaking exams that were not passed on a date established by the Faculty, with a maximum grade of 5 (Pass).

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 debate/presentation during the course, he/she will not take the exam.

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.

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):

- Caramani, D. (Ed.). (2023). *Comparative politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Landman, T., & Carvalho, E. (2016). *Issues and methods in comparative politics: an introduction*. Taylor & Francis.
- van der Eijk, C. (2018). *The Essence of Politics*. Amsterdam University Press.

Software

Not applicable.

Language list

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	50	English	first semester	afternoon
(TE) Theory	50	English	first semester	afternoon