Syllabus

Course Description

Course Title	Comparative Politics
Course Code	27209
Course Title Additional	
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	GSPS-02/A
Language	English
Degree Course	Bachelor in Economics, Politics and Ethics
Other Degree Courses (Loaned)	
Lecturers	dr. Benedetta Carlotti, Benedetta.Carlotti@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/45699
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	First semester
Course Year/s	1
CP	8
Teaching Hours	48
Lab Hours	-
Individual Study Hours	-
Planned Office Hours	24
Contents Summary	The course introduces students to the key concepts, theories, and methods used to analyze political systems across countries. Through a combination of lectures, discussions, and practical exercises, students explore institutions, political behavior, and outcomes, with a focus on contemporary phenomena such as populism and Euroscepticism. The course fosters critical thinking and equips students with the tools to interpret and evaluate political structures and processes. Students will also engage in collaborative research projects and learn to communicate their findings professionally.

Course Topics	The course is mandatory for the PPE and it belongs to the disciplinary sector of Political Science. The course provides an overview of the main concepts; theories, methods, and topics of Comparative Politics together with some first insights into the academic and professional practice of political research. Students will be encouraged to actively take part to the classes by discussing and critically analyzing the studied subjects. This continuous exercise will provide the students with the tool and the needed knowledge to professionally discuss and analyze phenomena concerning political institutions, behaviors and outcomes. The course will cover the following aspects: · What is comparative politics and how to study it: this first part introduces the course. It is dedicated to explaining the relevance of the discipline together with the main approaches in comparative politics and the core methods used. · Lessons from the history and beyond: this part of the course will be dedicated to understanding the origin of the nation-state, the type of polities and regimes, focusing on democracies (meaning and types of democracy), and authoritarian states. · Political structures and institutions: this part of the course provides notions on legislatures, governments, and bureaucracies, constitutional rights and judicial power, elections, and referenda with a focus on the multilevel structure of the European Union. · Who is in there and how it works: this part of the course is dedicated to understanding parties and party systems but also interest groups, social movements, and other core actors of politics adopting both a top-down and a bottom-up perspective. · Culture, communication, and participation: ideas, attitudes, political participation, and communication (with a special focus on populism and Euroscepticism). · Comparative political outcomes: public policies and political change. · Comparative political methods: the course offers an overview of the commonly used methods exploring also interdisciplinary methodologies. · Course summary: refresh all the core "take-aways" of the course, focusing on understanding research texts, their structure, and methods. During the course summary part, students will engage in an exam simulation (either written or oral).

	The various course sections will be structured to provide the students with basic discipline knowledge alongside some aspects of contemporary political phenomena (e.g.: the effects of the crises, political elections and so on). Furthermore, while discussing the proposed themes references to concrete and current case studies will be done.
Keywords	comparative politics, comparative political methods, political science
Recommended Prerequisites	
Propaedeutic Courses	None
Teaching Format	The course comprises lectures, seminars, and event participation. Students are strongly encouraged to actively engage during lectures.
Mandatory Attendance	Recommended, but not required
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes	ILO (Intended Learning Outcomes) ILO 1 Knowledge and understanding: ILO 1.1 the concept of the political system; ILO 1.2 the distinction between empirical and normative approaches; what theories are for; ILO 1.3 the relationship between state and individual; the concept of subjective right; the nature of third type constitutions; ILO 1.4 state, parliament, government and the judiciary; ILO 1.5 political parties, interest groups, movements; ILO 1.6 the European Union as a political system, the process of integration and the prospects of enlargement; ILO 2 Applying knowledge and understanding: ILO 2.1 ability to understand, analyse and identify political decision-making processes; ILO 2.2 ability to distinguish political systems on the basis of normative criteria (e.g. to distinguish the difference between democratic and authoritarian systems together with their subcategories) ILO 2.3 ability to distinguish political systems on the basis of empirical criteria (e.g. distinguish between parliamentary, presidential and semi-presidential systems)

	ILO 2.4 ability to analyse and anticipate the effects on the political system of particular events and/or actions such as, for example, general elections; ILO 2.5 ability to understand the political logic of globalisation processes; this allows for the integration of strictly political knowledge with that learnt in adjacent areas such as law and economics, which instead investigate the same processes from other perspectives; ILO 2.6 ability to analyse a technical text using appropriate theoretical tools; ILO 2.7 ability to produce a reasoned text on a political science topic ILO 3 Autonomy of judgement ILO 3.1 Acquisition of the capacity for judgement and methodological tools useful for the critical analysis of data, sources, assumptions and implications of scientific practice, the political, ethical and legal context within which economic phenomena are set and with which they interact ILO 4 Communication skills ILO 4.1 Proficiency (oral and written) in Italian, German and English, including translation between these languages. Intercultural competence. Conceptual awareness, synthesis and written expression, in particular in the drafting of scientific or science-based documents ILO 5 Learning skills ILO 5.1 Promotion of critical thinking and analytical skills to focus on complex problems in their long-term dynamics and the variety of their implications, including ethical ones
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes (additional info.)	Attending the lectures is not mandatory. However, attendance coupled with individual study and personal reflection will allow you to know and understand the key concepts, theories, and methods of comparative politics. You will be able to analyze, describe and classify political systems. Furthermore, the course is intended to provide you with a clear understanding of the core methods of

	political research while you will be able to critically analyze original academic articles. Thanks to the course, you will constructively discuss and judge political questions also concerning contemporary political phenomena (e.g.: populism and Euroscepticism). The course will also allow you to learn and professionally use the specific technical language of comparative politics while providing you with all the instruments to analyze, summarize and evaluate academic text (with a specific focus on original research articles).
Assessment	Please note that even if course attendance is not mandatory, it will determine different exam modalities. Indeed, the exam modalities are to be intended as follows: - Attending students: the exam will be divided in two parts. Please note that you will be judged upon two assignments structured as follows: o Group work (50% of the final grade) (ILOs: 3.1; 4.1; 5.1): you will have the chance to produce a group research work that might take different shapes (e.g.: poster to be presented and showed to the classroom, short audiovisual material, traditional presentation). The work will concern an issue of your choice to be picked up from the course's program. You will be given all the needed information and scientific material during the course. o Final exam (ILOs: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3;1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7): for attending students the exam will consist of (50% of the final grade): o 10 quick answer questions (short reply) o 2 analytical questions (long reply maximum 15 lines). Please note that that to obtain your final grade you will have to take part to both the activities listed above. Each activity will be judged following the criteria listed below. - Non-attending students: for those of you who will not attend the lectures you will be judged through a written exam (ILOs: 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4;1.5; 1.6; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7; 3.1; 4.1; 5.1) that will consist of: o 20 quick answer questions (0.5 points each) o 4 Analytical questions with a maximum of 8 lines answer (2.5 points each) o 2 Analytical questions with a maximum of 15 lines answer (5

	points each) Please note that further information concerning the exam modality and schedule will be provided to you during the first lectures of the course.
Evaluation Criteria	Written exam (attending and non-attending students) Evaluation will focus on: - Knowledge and recall of key concepts and arguments from the assigned readings. - Application of course content, including the ability to use concepts appropriately in relation to political and public-policy/decision-making problems. - Clarity and precision of written expression, including accuracy, structure, and appropriateness of terminology. - Critical reasoning, especially the ability to interpret, compare, and evaluate political phenomena and policy-related ideas. Group project (attending students only) Evaluation will focus on: - Quality of the research design, including clarity of the policy issue addressed and coherence of the methodological choices. - Implementation of the project, particularly the ability to plan, conduct, and document a small-scale empirical activity (e.g., use of qualitative/quantitative tools for comparative purposes). - Depth of analysis, including the ability to interpret findings and connect them to course concepts and relevant literature. - Teamwork and project organization, including effective collaboration and division of tasks. - Presentation and communication, assessed through the clarity, structure, creativity, and professionalism of the final output, regardless of its chosen format.
Required Readings	Caramani, Daniele (ed.) (2020). *Comparative politics (5th ed.).* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 664 pp.
Supplementary Readings	Supplementary readings will be provided to students during the course.

Further Information	
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Reduced inequalities, Peace, justice and strong institutions, Sustainable cities and communities