Laurea / B.A.
in Global Governance

Academic Year 2025-2026
Syllabus - Comparative Politics
CFU 6
Prof. Daniela Irrera

Course Description
The course aims to provide students with an understanding of the analytical categories of comparative politics. In particular, it covers political systems and their dynamics, the actors involved, and the processes through which they interact with society. It also covers the quality of political regimes and regional and global dynamics. Through a comparative study of different political systems, students will be able to recognise the distinct characteristics and modes of operation of various forms of democracy, participation, authoritarianism, and contestation.

Objective
The course provides a set of skills to help:
- understand political regimes, the main types of democracy and authoritarian regimes, and the processes of democratisation and regime change.
- analyse and discuss the level of involvement and action of relevant actors, both governmental and non-governmental, in different regions of the world;
- Develop social and relational skills, teamwork, and the ability to formulate policy plans and strategies.

Teaching Method
The course is taught in a tutorial style. Teaching will consist of lectures with slides presented by the instructor, followed by discussions of the main topics. The course includes working groups that aim to explore various aspects of political regimes and regional dynamics in different parts of the world. Case studies will focus on specific movements, mass protests, and 'sliding doors' moments in Europe, Latin America, the Indo-Pacific region, and North Africa.

Textbook and Materials
The following textbook is recommended for all attending and non-attending students as a basic preparation:

K. Newton; J.W.v Deth (2021), Foundations of Comparative Politics. Democracies of the Modern World. Cambridge Univ. Press, ISBN: 9781108927390

Other materials will be provided by the instructor during the course, especially for working groups.

Office hours
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NOTE: If you are an Erasmus or a non Global Governance student who would like to attend one or more courses in the Global Governance programme, please be aware that, before enrolling in the course, you should have read the code of conduct and the procedural rules characterizing our programme. We assume that, if you enroll in the course, you have read and accepted all Global Governance values and rules. Notice that attendance is expected from the very first lesson and you need to attend at least 80% of the course to be considered an attending student.

Course Requirements
Assessment of attending students is based on:
Participation to the discussions (20%);
Working Groups: Students will be split in groups and asked to deepen a specific topic (30%);
Final test: Each student replies to 5 open questions. It is a written text, scheduled at the end of the course (50%).

Students who have attended less than 80% of the classes will be considered non-attending students and will have to take the exam accordingly.
Non-attending students will be asked to pass a different final test. Non-attending students will be asked to take a different final test consisting of 15 open-ended questions on topics covered in the textbook. Students are given two hours to answer.

LESSONS' TOPICS

Part 1: Structural conditions and actors

1: Intro to the course to comparative politics

2: Nations and Nationalisms

3: Political parties;

4: Civil resistance and political violence;

5: Civil society organizations and movements;

Part 2: From authoritarianism to democracy

6: Revolutions, uprisings and regime change;

7. Authoritarianism and authoritarian regimes;

8: Democratization processes;

9: Hybrid regimes;

10: Democracy and democratic regimes;

Part 3: Working on case studies

11: The EU and the democratic deficit

12. European countries and backsliding.

13. Social movements and the democratic renaissance in Chile.

14. Women's empowerment in North Africa;

15. Rebel regime and newborn democracy in Syria;

16. The protection of democratic values in Korea.

Description of the methods and criteria for testing learning

The examination assesses the student's overall preparation, ability to integrate the knowledge of the different parts of the programme, consequentiality of reasoning, analytical ability and autonomy of judgement. In addition, language property and clarity of presentation are assessed, in accordance with the Dublin descriptors (1. knowledge and understanding; 2. applying knowledge and understanding; 3. making judgements; 4. learning skills; 5. communication skills).

The final grade will be related 70% to the degree of knowledge and 30% to the expressive capacity (written and oral) and autonomous critical judgement demonstrated by the student.

The examination will be graded according to the following criteria:

Unsuitable: important deficiencies and/or inaccuracies in the knowledge and understanding of the topics; limited capacity for analysis and synthesis, frequent generalisations and limited critical and judgement skills; the topics are exposed in an incoherent manner and with inappropriate language.

18-20: barely sufficient knowledge and understanding of the topics, with possible generalisations and imperfections; sufficient capacity for analysis, synthesis and autonomy of judgement; the topics are frequently exposed in an inconsistent manner and with inappropriate/technical language;

21-23: surface knowledge and understanding of the topics; ability to analyse and synthesise correctly with sufficiently coherent logical argumentation and appropriate/technical language.

24-26: fair knowledge and understanding of the topics; good analytical and synthetic skills with rigorously expressed arguments but not always appropriate/technical language.

27-29: complete knowledge and understanding of the topics; considerable capacity for analysis and synthesis. Good autonomy of judgement. Arguments presented in a rigorous manner and with appropriate/technical language.

30-30L: very good level of knowledge and thorough understanding of topics. Excellent analytical and synthetic skills and independent judgement. Arguments expressed in an original manner and in appropriate technical language.