Laurea / B.A.
in Global Governance

Academic Year 2026-2027
Syllabus
Political systems
CFU 6
Prof Rocco W. Ronza with Prof Michele Gaietta and Prof Antonio Zotti

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of politics and political institutions. It aims at familiarizing students with the main concepts of political science with a focus on the concepts of state, democracy, authoritarianism, and political representation. With special emphasis on the origins, evolution and the diversity of political arrangements, we will compare and contrast the political systems of various countries of the world, the roles of key political actors, political institutions, political processes and patterns of political competition. We will be particularly interested in the genealogy of political systems and in comparing European and non-European countries. The main objective for this course is to provide students with the broad context needed for analyzing the political phenomena of any country.

Teaching Method

The course is based on lectures introducing students with major political concepts and theories, and detailing case studies taken both from consolidated Western democracies, more recent democracies and non-democratic countries. Active participation is demanded on the part of students, as well as mandatory readings for each session. Lectures will be supplemented with practical study based on class discussions and collective student projects comparing or introducing specific countries.

Schedule of Topics

Topic 1	What is politics?
Topic 2	The state and state formation
Topic 3	Democracy and representation
Topic 4	Elections and party systems
Topic 5	Comparative methods and tools for global studies (Gaietta)
Topic 6	Bureaucracies and public policy (Gaietta)

Topic 7	Media and interest groups (Gaietta)
Topic 8	The EU: the transnationalization of democracy (Zotti)
Topic 9	Patterns of democracies – The case of "divided societies"
Focus 1	South Africa: from segregation to dominant-party democracy, to…
Topic 9	Authoritarianism and democratization
Topic 10	In-class presentation of student projects

Textbooks and Materials

Prof. Ronza

J. Møller, "The Medieval Roots of Democracy", *Journal of Democracy*, 26(3), 2015: 110-123.

K. Benoit, "Duverger's Law and the Study of Electoral Systems", *French Politics*, 4, 2006: 69–83.

J. J. Linz, "The Perils of Presidentialism", *Journal of Democracy*, 1 (1), 1990: 51-69.

A. Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.

S.P. Huntington. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

S.P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs*, 72, 1992: 22-49.

Prof. Gaietta

J. T. Dickovick and J. Eastwood, *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods, and Cases*. Oxford University Press, 2016 (chapter 1).

C. Dahlström and V. Lapuente, 'Comparative Bureaucratic Politics', *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 43–63, 2022.

Y. Steinebach, 'Environmental Policy Outputs, Outcomes, and Impacts', in *Routledge Handbook of Environmental Policy*, Routledge, 2023.

For Media and Interest groups see the slides uploaded on the course page.

Prof. Zotti

E.O. Eriksen and J.E. Fossum. 'Europe's Challenge: Reconstituting Europe or reconfiguring democracy?.' In *Rethinking democracy and the European Union*. Routledge, 2013. pp. 14-38.

J.E. Fossum and A.J. Menéndez 'Democracy and constitution-making in the European union.' in *Rethinking democracy and the European Union*. Routledge, 2013, pp. 57-73.

Assessment

Students will be assessed through

1) a written final examination, that will be based on essay questions and a multiple-choice section and will be aimed at determining students' ability to use the materials and information discussed in class, and

2) a group presentation. Students are demanded to study class material assiduously and actively take part in class discussions, notably as they prepare their presentations throughout the course. Their mark will also be rounded off so as to reflect their homework and participation in the class discussions.

Non-attending students are required to take the final exam test with an additional written part based on the readings listed in the "Textbooks and materials" section. The mark will be based 100% on the final.

Students who have attended less than 80% of the classes will be considered non-attending students and will have to take the exam accordingly.

Office hours

Contact email address: rocco.ronza@unicatt.it (general inquiries); michele.gaietta@unicatt.it; anonio.zotti@unicatt.it. In-person and online appointments with the professors must be taken by email.

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 75% of the course to be considered an attending student. **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 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.