

COURSE GUIDE

2024/25

Faculty323 - Faculty of Social and Communication Sciences

Cycle

DegreeGPOLIT31 - Bachelor's Degree in Political Science & Public-Sector Managem

Year

Second year

COURSE

27183 - Representation & Political Parties

Credits, ECTS:6

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course concentrates on the concept of political representation and its different meanings, as well as on how political representation has been institutionalised in contemporary democracies. In particular, attention is paid to two cornerstones of said institutionalisation: elections and electoral systems, and political parties.

In the context of the Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Public Management, this course:

- a) Is part of the second-year topic 'Political Processes and Structures in Contemporary Societies'.
- b) Builds on the content of the first-year courses 'Basic Concepts in Political Science' and 'Fundamentals of Political Analysis'.
- c) Will be necessary to study 'The Political System in Spain and the Basque Country', 'Political Communication', 'Political and Electoral Analysis', 'Comparative Politics', 'Political Marketing' and 'Political Action and Interest Groups' in the next years.

COMPETENCIES/LEARNING RESULTS FOR THE SUBJECT

The curriculum of the Degree in Political Science and Public Management identifies the following general competences (G) and transversal competences (CT), to the achievement of which this subject contributes:

G001 - Acquire knowledge and understand the meaning and relevance of concepts, theories and methodological approaches to observe political phenomena.

G002 - Understand the structure and functioning of political institutions and systems from a comparative perspective, in order to identify their components, their legal framework, interpret their interrelation, draw conclusions about their functioning and propose alternatives.

G003 - Identify the political actors in a given context, their capabilities and their behaviour, in order to analyse their effects on the political system and foresee scenarios.

G004 - Know electoral processes, from the formation and expression of political preferences to the representative logic of democratic systems, in order to design political communication campaigns, define post-electoral scenarios and interpret their results.

G005 - Understand the structure, organization and functioning of public administrations at different levels, in order to establish planning and administrative management processes.

CT1 - Autonomy and self-regulation.

CT3 - Communication and multilingualism.

CT5 - Information management and digital citizenship

CT6 - Information management and digital citizenship

CT7 - Critical thinking

Likewise, the subject contributes to the following specific competences:

C2CC01 &#8211; To understand concepts and theoretical approaches, as well as their evolution, in order to analyse and diagnose political and governance-related phenomena.

C2CC02 &#8211; To identify the structure and functioning of representative political systems, with special attention to the role of political parties and electoral processes, in order to understand and analyse individual and collective political behaviour and its consequences.

C2CC06 &#8211; To understand the factors conditioning the relations between different levels of the public administration and the citizenry, in order to intervene effectively in mediation processes, conflicts of interest and the promotion of rights.

Finally, these are the expected learning outcomes of the course:

1. Identify the most relevant types of representation in politics.
2. Assess these different types from the point of view of democratic theory.
3. Explain the history of representative government and its relation with democracy.
4. Identify those conceptual elements that link together the ideas of democracy and representation, as well as those other elements that undermine this link.
5. List and describe the basic elements of an electoral system.
6. List and describe the most common types of electoral systems.
7. Formulate reform proposals for electoral systems so as to enhance their proportionality, majoritarian effects or constrain the fragmentation of the party system.
8. Assess an electoral system from a plurality of relevant perspectives.
9. Explain the origins of political parties, their historical evolution, and their role in representative democracy.
10. Explain the basic features of party organisations and their general characteristics in Europe.
11. Define the concept of party system, gather relevant information on a given party system and identify to which type it belongs.

12. Discuss the interaction between electoral systems and party systems.

**Theoretical and Practical Contents**

Topics:  
Theoretical Programme:  
1. The concepts of political representation and representative government  
The concept of representation and theories of representation - Representation and the idea of national sovereignty - Imperative mandate vs representative mandate; delegates vs trustees - Representative Government  
  
2. The institutionalisation of political representation  
The institutions of representation - Medieval and moderns parliaments - Elections - Competitive and non-competitive elections - Elections and the political process: legitimation and other functions - Representative democracy  
  
3. Key elements of electoral systems  
The electoral process, electoral law and electoral system - The right to vote - Types of ballots and candidacies - The electoral district - Seat allocation formulae  
  
4. Types and effects of electoral systems  
Types of electoral systems - Historical evolution - Majority rule - Proportional representation - Normative principles underpinning MR and PR - Examples of electoral systems  
  
5. Political parties  
The origins of political parties - The constitutionalisation of political parties - The organisation of political parties - Functions of political parties - Types of parties and their evolution  
  
6. Party systems  
Classification criteria and types of party systems - Indicators - The statics and dynamics of party systems - Electoral systems and party systems  
  
Practical Programme:  
The practical programme is adjusted at the beginning of each course to the size of the class, students' interests, current political affairs, the availability of new studies and data, and so on. This is a list of possible assignments: the discussion of key texts in the history of political thought and in contemporary political theory on political representation and on democracy, more generally; the holding of debates on topics such as the so-called 'crisis of representation'; the making of presentations on how voting rights are regulated in different countries; the completion of exercises on gerrymandering, i.e. the manipulation of electoral districts; and the analysis of electoral results, with a special emphasis on how specific elements of the electoral system influence electoral outcomes, as well as of party systems or party organisations.

**TEACHING METHODS**

The course amounts to 6 ECTS, i.e. 60 classroom hours--46 of which will be dedicated to the theoretical programme, and 14 to the practical one--and 90 hours of student work.  
The course combines:  
- Lectures, where the instructor introduces the theoretical programme of the course. Students are expected to attend the classes, and they will occasionally be asked to also adopt an active role by asking and answering questions, making comments, and so on.  
- Seminars / practical training. These are sessions dedicated to the practical programme, and students are expected to adopt a more active role throughout them.  
  
Out-of-class activities will be devoted to reading papers, searching for data and learning the content of the lectures. For the completion of the practical programme, students will need, on average, four hours of out-of-class work per week, to carry out group work or individual one, as well as one hour of in-class work.

**TYPES OF TEACHING**

Types of teaching	M	S	GA	GL	GO	GCL	TA	TI	GCA
Hours of face-to-face teaching	46	14							
Horas de Actividad No Presencial del Alumno/a	69	21							

**Legend:** M: Lecture-based S: Seminar GA: Applied classroom-based groups  
GL: Applied laboratory-based groups GO: Applied computer-based groups GCL: Applied clinical-based groups  
TA: Workshop TI: Industrial workshop GCA: Applied fieldwork groups

**Evaluation methods**

- Continuous evaluation
- End-of-course evaluation



### Evaluation tools and percentages of final mark

- Written test, open questions 50%
- Exercises, cases or problem sets 50%

### ORDINARY EXAMINATION PERIOD: GUIDELINES AND OPTING OUT

The course follows a continuous evaluation system that combines two assessment tools:

- Completion of group and individual assignments pertaining to the practical programme (see above). In total, they amount to up to 50% of the final mark.
- Written exam, consisting of open-ended questions pertaining to the content of the lectures. During the course, three optional midterm exams, also consisting of open-ended questions, can be held on topics 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6, respectively, so that the final exam is substituted by the midterm ones. In any case, whether or not midterm exams will be written will be specified at the beginning of each academic year, as it depends on factors such as the size of the group of students and the academic calendar.

All students have the right to quit the continuous evaluation system and opt for a final assessment system. Those who would like to choose this second option should inform the lecturer in written form about this during the first nine weeks of the semester. Students choosing the final assessment system will be expected to write the same exam as those following the continuous evaluation system (50% of the final mark), and to complete or hand in various assignments on the date of the final exam (50% of the final mark). They will be related to the practical programme of the course. Their exact content will be announced in due course.

Both in the continuous evaluation system and in the final assessment system, failure to take the final exam or any of the midterm exams will result in a 'no show' mark.

#### Academic Dishonesty Policy

Academic dishonesty includes such things as cheating, inventing false information or citations. One special grave case is plagiarism, which means using another person's words, ideas or work without citation, hence, pretending that it is your own. Cases of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade (0 points) for the assignment where the case of dishonesty is detected.

### EXTRAORDINARY EXAMINATION PERIOD: GUIDELINES AND OPTING OUT

The same conditions as the ones described above for the ordinary exam call apply to the retake. Students following the continuous assessment system can resit the final exam, while keeping all their other grades. Students who have opted for the final assessment system are expected to take again a written exam (50%) and to complete or hand in additional assignments related to the practical programme on the day of the resit (50%).

### MANDATORY MATERIALS

Compulsory readings will be announced in due course and made available on eGela.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### Basic bibliography

Gallagher, Michael and Paul Mitchel, eds., 2005, The Politics of Electoral Systems. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
Herron, Erik S., Robert J. Pekkanen, and Matthew S. Shugart, eds., 2018, The Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
Katz, Richard S. and Peter Mair, 1995, Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy. Party Politics, 1(1): 5-28.  
Manin, Bernard, 1997, The Principles of Representative Government. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
Sartori, Giovanni, 2005 (orig. 1976), Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis. Colchester: ECPR Press.  
Scarrow, Susan E, Paul D. Webb, and Thomas Poguntke, eds., 2017, Organizing Political Parties: Representation, Participation, and Power. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
Stasavage, David, 2020, The Decline and Rise of Democracy: A Global History from Antiquity to Today. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

#### Detailed bibliography

For additional references, students are strongly encouraged to consult Scopus and Web of Science, as well as the database of the university's library, which are being constantly updated.

#### Journals

For additional references, students are strongly encouraged to consult Scopus and Web of Science, as well as the database of the university's library, which are being constantly updated.

#### Web sites of interest

Given the changing nature of this information, relevant links (if any) will be provided in the materials distributed in class.

### OBSERVATIONS