

Gonzaga-in-Florence

ITALIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM - POLS 357 (3 credits)

Prof. Bernard Gbikpi, PhD – bernard.gbikpi@eui.eu

Fall Semester 2008 - Meeting Times: Monday 15:35 - 18:15

Course Content

This course focuses on the recent developments of Italian politics with a focus on the party system, the electoral system, the parliamentary system, the form of the state and recent moves towards federalism, the interest groups and the judiciaries.

Course objectives

The aim of this course is to provide students with a basic knowledge of the main institutions, actors and ongoing processes of change of contemporary Italian politics. At the end of the semester the students are expected to show evidence that they can understand, restate and comment the argument of a journal article on Italian politics from learned journals such as *Italian Politics and Society*, *Italian Politics: A Review*, *Modern Italy*, *The Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, or like journals.

Course description

Sessions consist in two parts. One consists in a presentation and discussion by the students of one journal article bearing on the previous week topic. The second part consists in a lecture.

Exams (mid- and final) consist in reading, and accounting for a journal article on Italian politics.

Course grading

Participation of students (spontaneity, attention/interest paid to the session, and constancy/assiduity along the semester) counts for 25% of the total grade.

Paper presentation and research paper counts for 25% of the total grade.

Mid-term exam and final exam contribute each to 25% of the total grade.

Bibliography

1) Students must have the **reading pack** consisting in the journal articles for their presentation and discussion (available in Alessandro's office).

2) The textbooks we will work with are available at GIF library:

- Maurizio Cotta and Luca Verzichelli, 2007, *Political Institutions in Italy*, Oxford, OUP
- Martin J. Bull & James L. Newell, 2005, *Italian Politics. Adjustment under duress*, Cambridge-Malden, Polity Press

3) Students are expected to visit regularly **on line newspapers** such as:

<http://www.ansa.it/>;

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/italy/>;

<http://www.iht.com/pages/europe/index.php>

September 22, 2008

➤ *Introduction to the course*

● **From 1st to 2nd Republic**

➤ *Lecture 1*

September 29, 2008

➤ *Student's presentation of* Leonardo Morlino and Marco Tarchi, 1996, The dissatisfied society: The roots of political change in Italy, *European Journal of Political Research*, 30, 41-63

● **From 1st to 2nd Republic**

➤ *Lecture 2*

October 06, 2008

➤ *Student's presentation of* Martin Bull and Martin Rhodes, 2007, 'Introduction - Italy: A contested polity', *West European Politics*, 30:4, 657 – 669

● **The Italian Party System**

➤ *Lecture: The Republic of Parties: From Deadlock to Bipolar Alternation*

October 13, 2008

➤ *Student's presentation of* Ilvo Diamanti, 2007, The Italian Centre-Right and Centre-Left: Between Parties and 'the Party', *West European Politics*, 30, 4, 733-62

● **Electoral System and Elections**

➤ *Lecture: The Electoral System and current government*

October 20, 2008

➤ *Student's presentation of* Gianfranco Pasquino, 2007, Tricks and Treats: The 2005 Italian electoral law and its consequences, *South European Society & Politics*, 12, 1, pp. 79–93

● **The Executive**

➤ *Lecture: The Executive*

October 27, 2008

● **Mid-term exam**

Novembre 10, 2008

➤ *Correction of mid-term*

● **The Parliament**

➤ *Lecture: The Parliament*

November 17, 2008

- *Student's presentation of* Luca Verzichelli, 2003, Much Ado About Something? Parliamentary Politics in Italy Amid the Rhetoric of Majority Rule and an Uncertain Party System, *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 9, 2, 35-55

- **Local Government**

- Lecture

Local Government & Paths towards Federalism

November 24, 2008

- *Student's presentation of* Duncan McDonnell 2006, A weekend in Padania; Regionalist Populism and the Lega Nord, *Politics*, 26, 2, 126-32

- **The Judiciary**

- Lecture

The Judicial Power

December 1st, 2008

- *Student's presentation of* Della Porta, Donatella and Alberto Vannucci, 2007, Corruption and Anti-Corruption: The Political Defeat of 'Clean Hands' in Italy, *West European Politics*, 30, 4, 830-853

- **Interest Groups/Industrial Relations**

- Lecture

Interest Groups and Industrial Relations

December 10, 2008

- *Student's presentation of* Oscar Molina and Martin Rhodes, 2007, Industrial relations and the welfare state in Italy: Assessing the potential of negotiated change, *West European Politics*, 30, 4, 803-829

- **Italian Politics: A Review**

- Lecture

Italian political system: A review

December 15, 2008

- **Final Exam**

THE OUTLINE

- 1) The **main argument(s)**:
 - a. What is the overall claim of the article? (or/and) What is the author trying to convince us of?

- b. Can we formulate the argument into a sentence or two? (or/and) Is there a sentence *in the text* where the author formulates it?
- 2) How does the author lead the argument? or What the **demonstration** consists in?
- 3) We should aim to make an **assessment** of the argument: Does the argument convince us? Is only part of it convincing? Is it cogent/logical? Do we think it helps us understanding something fundamental about the issue at stake? What do we believe the strengths and weaknesses of the text are? Is there any particular assumption that is important for the argument that we think should be strengthened?

HOW TO WRITE THE REVIEW/RESEARCH PAPER:

The review part of your paper is a thoughtful account of the piece of writing you've read. The point of the review is to describe the piece of writing's content and argument(s) and to present some kind of discussion of it supported with some quotations from the writing that illustrate the points you're making. A person who has not read the piece of writing should be able to decide, from what you have written, whether or not to read it.

The research part of your paper is a bibliography of works that support your discussion of the author.

Your paper should include the following:

- ✓ Bibliographical information about the writing, including author(s), title of the chapter, title of the book, publishing information, date, page numbers (always appears at the top of your review)
- ✓ General summary of content (what is the writing about)
- ✓ Discussion of author's main point (why did the author write the book/chapter; what's the point(s) being made?)
- ✓ Identification of the main elements of argument (summarize the reasons the author cites to support the main argument)
- ✓ Discussion of the conclusion (what does the author conclude?)
- ✓ Identification of at least 2 problems/strengths that might be noted about the writing, the argument(s), the sources of information, the presentation, etc.
- ✓ Suggest, fix, discuss, the problems/strengths you've noted. What might have made the work stronger/better? What is so special about the really good aspects of the work?
- ✓ Suggest at least two bibliographical sources for supporting the discussion of the problems/strengths you've identified and give sufficient hints on their content.

Your paper should be between a medium-length paper (1500 words or 6 double-spaced pages) and a long paper (2500 words or 10 double-spaced pages).

Journals

On Italian Politics

Italian Politics and Society

Italian Politics: A Review

Modern Italy

The Journal of Modern Italian Studies

Other journals likely to contain articles on Italian politics

South European society & politics

Electoral Studies

Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans

Party Politics

Political Studies

Government and Opposition

West European Politics
