

GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS

Course: POLS 370: Modern Democracies
Credits: 3 Credits
Instructor: Bernard Gbikpi, PhD



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COURSE CONTENT

Along the semester the course is divided into two parts. The first part will be dedicated to the notion of political participation and to the actors of the political process in modern democracies: political parties, interest groups, social movements, political participation and new forms of political participation. The second part will be concerned with the main institutions of democratic systems: party systems, electoral systems, parliamentary and presidential governments, adversarial and consensual forms of democracy. The conclusion will be dedicated to challenges faced by modern democracies, such as exporting democracy, immigration and multiculturalism, the making of a democratic European Union.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The aim of this course is to provide students with a basic knowledge of the main theories about political institutions and political actors of modern democracies. At the end of the semester the students are expected to be able to restate and comment the argument of a learned journal article.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sessions have two parts: a lecture part and a discussion part on the basis of the readings. The discussion is organized along the presentation of two different papers by two students. The exact format of the discussion is discussed with the students during the first session. For the discussion all the students will have read the major assigned reading paper. An outline of the assigned reading and reaction to the reading is due by each student in each session. Students' presentation is the basis of their semester research paper. Exams consist in reading, and accounting for a journal article.

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.

MATERIAL

- A **reading pack** with the readings and material for students presentation is made available.
- The **textbook** is Michael Gallagher, Michael Laver and Peter Mair, 1995, *Representative Government in Modern Europe*, New York: McGraw-Hill

INTRODUCTION

Session 1: January 08

Part I: Political Participation and Political Actors

Session 2: January 15

Political participation

Assigned Reading: - Arend Lijphart, 1997, "Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma", *American Political Science Review*, 91, 1, 1-14.

Session 3: January 22

Political parties

Assigned Reading: Philippe Schmitter, 2001, "Parties are not What they Once Were", in Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther, eds., *Political Parties and Democracy*, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, pp. 67-89.

Session 4: January 29

Interest Groups: the Democratic Theory Approach and the Policy Approach: Neo-Corporatism and pluralism

Assigned Reading: - Wyn Grant, 2001, Pressure Politics: From 'Insider' Politics to Direct Action, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 54, pp. 337-348.

Session 5: February 05

Citizen politics: social movements

Assigned Reading: - Dieter Rucht and Jochen Roose, "The German Environmental Movement at Crossroads?" (1999, *Environmental Politics*, 8, 1, pp. 59-80)

Session 6: February 12

Democratic Innovation

Assigned reading: - Pippa Norris, 2002, *Democratic Phoenix: Agencies, Repertoires, and Targets of Political Activism*, Paper given at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, 29th August-1st September.

Session 7: February 19

Mid-term Exams

Part II: Democratic Institutions

Session 8: February 26

Electoral systems: simple majority and proportional systems

Assigned Reading: - Pippa Norris, 2006, The Impact of Electoral Reform on Women's Representation, *Acta Politica*, 41, 2, 197-213

Session 9: March 05

The Party Systems: Two-Party System and Multi-Party System

Assigned Reading: Peter Mair, 1997, "Myths of Electoral Change and the Survival of the 'Old' Parties", in id., *Party System Change. Approaches and Interpretations*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, pp. 76-90.

Session 10: March 12

Parliamentarism and Presidentialism (Executive and Parliaments)

Assigned Reading: - Luca Verzichelli, 2003, Italy: Delegation and Accountability in a Changing Parliamentary Democracy, in Kaare Strøm, Wolfgang C. Müller, and Torbjörn Bergman, eds., *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, pp. 445-73.

Session 11: March 19

Majoritarian and Consensual models of democracy: Arend Lijphart

Assigned Reading: - Arend Lijphart, 1999, *Patterns of Democracy*, Chapters 1 ("Introduction"), 2 ("The Westminster Model of Democracy"), 3 ("The Consensus Model of Democracy"), and 14 ("The Two-Dimensional Conceptual Map of Democracy"), New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

The discussion will confront adversarial and consensual arguments through country studies:

Conclusion: Assessing Modern Democracies: Observing the European Polity

Session 12: March 26

Challenges for modern democracies

The European Polity as a problem of democracy engineering and an illustration of modern democracies challenges: between governance and democracy

Assigned Reading: - Robert A. Dahl, 1994, "A Democratic Dilemma: System Effectiveness versus Citizen Participation", *Political Science Quarterly*, 109, 1, pp. 23-34.

Session 13: April 02

Exporting democracy

Assigned Reading: - Thomas Carothers, 2002, The End of the Transition Paradigm, *Journal of Democracy*, 13, 1, pp. 5-21.

Session 14: April 16

Final Exams

NB: The readings indicated might change