

GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE

ITALIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM - POLS 357 (3 credits)

Dr Bernard Gbikpi, PhD

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Fall Semester 2011 - Meeting Time: Monday 3:35 - 6:30 pm – Room 303

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 *Bulletin of Italian Politics*; *Italian Politics and Society*, *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 (the review paper, oral participation, and constancy/assiduity along the semester) counts for 50% of the total grade.

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

Bibliography

1) The **readings** are available on **Blackboard**; they can also be printed out as a reading pack if preferred (for about 12 to 15 Euro).

2) The **textbook** is James L. Newell, 2010, *The Politics of Italy. Governance in a Normal Country*, Cambridge UK, Cambridge University Press.

Also available at GiF library, and useful, are: 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; Andrea Mammone & Giuseppe Veltri, eds., 2010, *Italy Today. The Sick Man of Europe*, London & New York, Routledge; Daniele Albertazzi et al., eds., 2009, *Resisting the tide: cultures of opposition under Berlusconi (2001-06)*, New York, London, Continuum International Pub. Group.

3) **On line newspapers**: <http://www.ansa.it/> section English News (at the bottom of the home page); <http://www.iht.com/pages/europe/index.php>

4) **Journals**: *Italian Politics and Society*; *Modern Italy*; *Bulletin of Italian Politics*; *The Journal of Modern Italian Studies*; **Others**: *South European society & politics*; *West European Politics*; *Government and Opposition*; *Electoral Studies*; *Party Politics*; *Political Studies*.

SCHEDULE

September 19, 2011

➤ *Introduction to the course*

- **Historical Background and From 1st to 2nd Republic**

➤ Lecture

The Italian Polity and Its Long-Term Transformation

September 26, 2011

➤

Sergio Fabbrini, 2009, The Transformation of Italian Democracy, *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, 1, 1, 29-47

- **Elections, Voting and Political Parties**

➤ Lecture

October 03, 2011

➤ Students presentation

Catherine Moury, 2011, Italian coalitions and electoral promises: assessing the democratic performance of the Prodi I and Berlusconi II governments

- **The Constitutional Framework**

➤ Lecture

October 10, 2011

➤ Students presentation

Cesare Pinelli, 2006, The 1948 Italian Constitution and the 2006 Referendum: Food for Thought, *European Constitutional Law Review*, 2, 3, 329-40

- **Policy-making & Policy implementations: Executive, Legislatures and Bureaucrats I**

➤ Lecture

The Parliament and Executive (and Bureaucracy and Parliament)

October 17, 2011

➤ Students presentation

Riccardo Pelizzo, 2009, 'Nihil Novi Sub Sole'? Executive Power, the Italian Parlamento and the "War on Terror", *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 15, 2, 277-293

- **Policy-making & Policy implementations: Executive, Legislatures and Bureaucrats II**

➤ Lecture

Executive and Bureaucracy

October 24, 2011

➤ **Mid-term**

Francesco Marangoni, 2010, The Costs of the Prolonged Crisis of Government: The Legislative Performance of the Fourth Berlusconi Government Two and a Half Years into Legislature, *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, 2, 2, 95-110

October 31, 2011

- Correction of mid-term and students' presentation

- **TBA: In function of interdisciplinary Session**

- Lecture

November 07, 2011

- Students presentation

TBA in function of the interdisciplinary Session

- **Interest and Interest Mediation: Voluntary Associations & Pressure Groups**

- Lecture

November 15, 2011

- Students presentation

Daniela Piana, 2010, From Constitutional Body to Policy Arena Politics, Inescapable Companion of the Italian Judicial Council, *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, 2, 2, 39-54

- **Political Culture and Behavior**

- Lecture

November 22, 2011

- Students presentation

Chris Hanretty, 2011, The Concept of Pluralism in the Italian Public Media, *Modern Italy*, 16, 1, 19-34

- **Multi-Level Government**

- Lecture

November 29, 2011

- Students presentation

Fabbrini, Sergio and Brunazzo, Marco, 2003, Federalizing Italy: The Convergent Effects of Europeanization and Domestic Mobilization, *Regional & Federal Studies*, 13, 1, 100-120

- Debate for general assessment of the course

December 05, 2011

- Students presentation

Leonardo Morlino, 2009, Transition from Democracy to Democracy: Is It Possible in Italy?, *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, 1, 1, 7-27

- Presentation of the final

December 12, 2011

- **Final Exam**

THE REVIEW PAPER
(printed copy & electronic copy **if** requested)

The review paper is a thoughtful account of the piece of writing you have read. The point of the review is to analytically restate the argument(s) and the contents of the reading, to discuss it, and to propose issues and bibliographical sources for further research. Your review paper should have the following structure:

- 1) Report the **complete bibliographical reference** of the piece you are reviewing: author(s), year of publication, title of the article, *name of the journal*, volume number, issue number, page numbers, and the author(s)'s professional position.
- 2) The **issue** and **main argument(s)**:
 - a. What is the issue discussed in the writing?
 - b. Formulate the argument into a few sentences. Or what is the author trying to convince us of?
- 3) How does the author lead the argument? or What the **demonstration** consists in?
 - a. Describe in one paragraph the structure of the article; (the article includes n sections: an introduction (pp.); section 1 entitled (pp.); section 2 entitled (pp.); etc...)
 - b. Restate the content of the article section by section (and sub-section by sub-section). If necessary, identify by yourself sections in the article. The scope of this exercise is to follow and restate the author's reasoning step by step.
- 4) We aim to make an **assessment** of the argument in two parts that are **strengths** and **weaknesses**. Indicative questions toward such assessment are: 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? Is there any particular assumption that is important for the argument that we think should be strengthened? Are the empirical facts reported by the author relevant, accurate? Are they any alternative or counter-arguments mentioned by the author her/himself? Does the author use particular words or concepts that are particularly important for his/her argument/demonstration? What does s/he mean by these words or concepts? Is s/he consistent in her/his use of them?...
- 5) **Further research:** Retain one or two questions/issues from your assessment that you would like to think about further, and identify in the bibliographical references provided in the article at least two sources that are likely to address your questions/issues. Say why you think the sources in question are apposite. Fully report their bibliographical references.
