Course: Italian Political System (Pols 357)  
Credits: 3 credits  
Instructor: Dr Bernard Gbikpi, PhD (gbikpi@gonzaga.edu)

Office Hours: By appointment  
Schedule: Wednesday 3:35 – 6:30 pm

Prerequisites: None

Course Description
This course describes and analyses the current Italian political system and the change it has undergone since the early 1990s. As for the political system, it focuses on actors and institutions that are the Prime Minister, the Italian parliament, the party-system, the electoral law, the President of the Republic, and the judicial system. From a thematic approach, it considers in the second part of the semester some challenges that current Italian politics are confronted with such as the question of the gap between Northern and Southern Italy, the impact of the Catholic culture on politics, the issue of immigration to Italy, and the Europeanization of Italian politics. As for the change that the political system has undergone since the early 1990s, the course approaches it through Arend Lijphart’s two models of democracy that are the consensual and the adversarial models, and it conceives the change as a transition between one type of democracy to another.

Course Objectives
The aim of this course is to develop the students’ capacity to think Italian politics conceptually and critically. It provides them knowledge of the main institutions, actors and ongoing processes of change of the Italian political system using mainly journals’ academic debates around those questions.

Learning Objectives
At the end of the semester the students are expected to be able to restate and explain arguments of articles on Italian politics published in learned journals -such as the Contemporary Italian Politics; Italian Politics and Society, Modern Italy, The Journal of Modern Italian Studies- using the vocabulary and the concepts proper to the Italian political system.

Teaching Method
Sessions consist in two parts. The first consists in a presentation and discussion by the students of one journal article bearing on the topic that has been introduced by the instructor at the preceding class. The discussion is nourished by answers to questions the instructor will have raised about the article. Answers may be found within the article or may require some research through Internet for supporting or infrimming empirical data. The second part consists in a lesson by the instructor on the next issues and questions with the support of Power Point slides and (possibly) of news footage on the topic and along with the introduction to the contents and arguments of the following week’s article.

Teaching Commitment
I aim at obtaining serious and joyous interactive discussions in class on the basis of everybody’s actual knowledge of the reading of the same material. In my experience, such readings and discussions are an effective pedagogical tool for learning about a discipline, namely that of political science, its methods, its concepts, and about Italian politics in particular. Not the least, when successful, each class becomes an agreeable time and nice record for everybody.
DECORUM
Cell-phones and e-mail boxes must be off; however, web browsers may remain switched on to the extent that they may serve the class’ learning purposes.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
Students are presumed to have sufficient maturity to recognize their responsibility for regular class attendance. Gonzaga University’s standard policy on absences stipulates that the maximum allowable absence is two class hours (100 minutes) for each class credit. The course being a three credit course and being organized by three-hour long classes, the maximum allowable absence is two classes in the semester. The grade given for exceeding absences is a “V”, which has the same effect as “F” (Fail) and is counted in the GPA. This outcome can be appealed to the Dean. I need the students to give me the precise reason for any absence. For any absence that is not due to illness or extraordinary event the participation grade for the missed class will be 0.

COURSE GRADING
The written answers to questions for discussing the articles count for 25% of the total grade. Oral participation counts for 25% of the total grade. Mid-term exam and final exam each consist in a review paper (find details below) and an essay and contribute each to 25% of the total grade.

ORAL PARTICIPATION
Oral participation consists in participating to the class discussion. At a minimum, it consists in “voicing” your responses to the questions on the reading of the day.

Participation grading
The full point (FP) on participation is granted if you have expressed your opinion on any point of the argument and if you have engaged somebody else’s argument.

MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAM
They consist in two parts. One is a take-home review-paper of an assigned journal article on Italian politics and the second is an in-class essay that elaborates upon the argument provided in the assigned journal in question. Basically the essay is the extension of the point 4 of a review paper, i.e. an extended assessment of the article’s argument.

The Review Paper
The review paper is a 4/5-page long thoughtful account of the assigned 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 a research issue and question and bibliographical sources for launching it. 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 –the argument is what the author is 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? Why? 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: Write down a research question that you are genuinely curious about. A research question should reflect an underlying tension and should force to weigh evidence and compare different opinions. State your thesis that is what kind of argument you hope to make. Identify and indicate at least two bibliographical sources that are likely to address your question. Say why you think the sources in question are apposite. Fully report their references.

NB: Specific questions for writing the assessment and/or the research question may also be assigned by the instructor.

A template of a review paper will be made available on Blackboard.

The Essay Paper

The essay should be structured like the review paper but with your argument, that is: a title of yours; the issue and argument of your essay; an outline of it; the unfolding of your argument along entitled sections; a conclusion that reassesses your point and that provides bibliographical clues for further reflection. It should include a bibliography.

NB: A specific question for writing your essay may also be assigned by the instructor.

Essay grading

The essay will be evaluated along the clarity of its argument, the clarity of its structure, the consistency of its follow-up, its engagement with the literature of the field, and the perspectives it opens for further reflection.

Final Grades Conversion

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>GPA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92.5 – 100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.0 - 92.4</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>87.5 – 89.9</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>82.5 – 87.4</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.0 – 82.4</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>75.5 – 79.9</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<td>72.5 – 77.4</td>
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<td>Average</td>
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<tr>
<td>70.0 – 72.4</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>67.5 – 69.9</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>60.0 – 67.4</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<td>0.00 – 59.9</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failing</td>
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<td>Exceeding absences</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Failing</td>
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Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is essential to education and represents the bond of trust between the university, the instructor and the student.

Academic dishonesty is any action by which a student seeks to claim credit for the intellectual effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic exercise. It includes unauthorized assistance in tests and examinations; intentionally impeding or damaging the academic work of others; submitting another person’s work as your own, or providing work for this purpose; submitting work of your own that has been substantially edited and revised by another person, or providing such an editing and revision service for others; submitting material from a source (books, articles, internet sites) without proper citation and bibliographic reference; paraphrasing material from a source without appropriate reference and citation; submitting substantially the same
piece of work in more than one course without the explicit consent of all the instructors concerned; assisting other students in any of the above acts; plagiarism, defined as claiming intellectual property on somebody else's work, in other words as cultural theft. Written assignments will be submitted to the plagiarism detection procedures of TurnItIn.com., activated on Blackboard. Students who are academically dishonest will receive “0”, zero on the work in question or a failing grade for the course as a whole, depending on the importance of the work to the overall course grade and the judgment of the instructor. A plagiarized assignment/paper, research project, etc will be graded 0 (zero) and sent to the Main Campus accompanied by a report.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES
Documented learning disabilities or other medically certified problems that need special accommodation for any of the student's expected academic performances will be treated with the due attention.

REQUIRED READINGS
The required readings are available on Blackboard and listed here below in the Course Outline and schedule section.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
- A number of textbooks is available at GiF library (No need to purchase any)
  Gianfranco Pasquino and Marco Valbruzzi, 2015, *A Changing Republic: Politics and Democracy in Italy*, Edizioni Epoké (not available in GiF library at the moment)

- Journals: *Contemporary Italian Politics; The Journal of Modern Italian Studies; Modern Italy; Italian Politics and Society. Others: South European Society & Politics; West European Politics; Government and Opposition; Electoral Studies; Party Politics; Political Studies

- Online newspapers:
The National Italian News Agency (Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata): [http://www.ansa.it/](http://www.ansa.it/) section English News (at the top menu of the home page);
[http://www.agi.it/english-version/italy](http://www.agi.it/english-version/italy) AGI - Agenzia Giornalistica Italia, set up in 1950, is one of the Italian leading press agencies.
The international section of the *Corriere della Sera* (main centre-right oriented national Italian newspaper): [http://www.corriere.it/](http://www.corriere.it/) (see menu at the bottom of the page)
Presseurope (a European Commission financed news website publishing a daily selection of articles chosen from more than 200 international news titles, then translated into ten languages among which English): [http://www.presseurop.eu](http://www.presseurop.eu)

- Bibliographic Databases
  Academic Search Complete - JSTOR
COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE
NB: Some readings may be changed

September 14, 2016
➢ Introduction to the course
➢ Lecture on Italian politics, the interpretative framework, the issues, the challenges

September 21, 2016
➢ Students’ presentation and class discussion on
  o Elisabetta De Giorgi & Selena Grimaldi, 2015, The Italian political system in the last twenty years: change, adaptation or unfinished transition?, Contemporary Italian Politics, 7, 1, 3-9
➢ Lecture on The historical Background and the transition from 1st to the 2nd Republic

September 28, 2016
➢ Students’ presentation and class discussion on
  o Eugenio Salvati, 2016, Matteo Renzi: a new leadership style for the Italian Democratic Party and Italian politics, Modern Italy, 21, 1, 7-18
➢ Lecture on The Second Republic

October 05, 2016
➢ Students’ presentation and class discussion on
  o Federico Russo, 2015, Two steps forward and one step back: the majority principle in the Italian Parliament since 1994, Contemporary Italian Politics, 7, 1, 27-41
➢ Lecture on The political parties, the electoral system and the last general elections (February 2013)

October 12, 2016
➢ Students’ presentation and class discussion on
➢ Lecture on The constitutional framework and a focus on the President of the Republic

October 19, 2016
➢ Students’ presentation and class discussion on
  o Nicola Palladino, 2015, ‘Presidentialisations’ in Italy: the battle for leadership between the Prime Minister and the President of the Republic, Contemporary Italian Politics, 7, 2, 107-26
➢ Lecture The Italian Judiciary

October 26, 2016
➢ Mid-term exam
November 02, 2016
➢ Correction and class discussion on
  o Andrea Ceron & Marco Mainenti, 2015, Toga Party: The Political Basis of Judicial Investigations against MPs in Italy (1983–2013), South European Society and Politics, 20, 2, 223-42

➢ Lecture on Italy’s North-South Gap

November 09, 2016
➢ Students’ presentation and class discussion on
  o Sara González, 2011, The North/South divide in Italy and England: Discursive construction of regional inequality, European Urban and Regional Studies, 18, 1, 62-76

➢ Lecture on Catholic culture and political commitment in Italy

November 16, 2016
➢ Students’ presentation and class discussion on
  o Luca Ozzano, 2015, The debate about same-sex marriages/civil unions in Italy’s 2006 and 2013 electoral campaigns, Contemporary Italian Politics, 7, 2, 144-60

➢ Lecture on Immigration to Italy

November 30, 2016
➢ Students’ presentation and class discussion on
  o Marco Tarchi, 2015, Italy the promised land of populism, Contemporary Italian Politics, 7, 3, 273-85

➢ Lecture on Europeanization of Domestic Italian Policies

December 07, 2016
➢ Students’ presentation and class discussion on
  o Renaud Dehousse, 2013, Negative Europeanisation: European issues in the Italian elections, Contemporary Italian Politics, 5, 2, 166-78

➢ Discussion and presentation of final

December 14, 2016
➢ Final exam