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CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY AND REPRESENTATION IN THE EU

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Challenges to Democracy and Representation in the EU

Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Catania

Comparative Politics – Global Comparative Politics Module

Master's Programme in Global Politics and Euro-Mediterranean Relations (LM-62)

Academic year 2024-25

Syllabus

Syllabus of the module as distributed to students. The course is now titled Democracy and Authoritarianism – Global Dynamics.

The course is taught under the Jean Monnet Chair EuDARe (Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Chair, project 101127735). This cover sheet was added by the Chair to the archive copy published on eudare.eu.

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Comparative Politics Course

Global Comparative Politics Module

Academic year 2024-2025, Fall Semester

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Aims and scope

The course provides the theoretical and empirical foundations needed for the analysis of institutions, actors and processes of political systems. The students will use the comparative politics literature to analyse key issues in the public and scientific debates, with special emphasis on the state of democracy in the world. The first part of the course will have a global scope, whereas the second part will focus on European politics.

This syllabus provides details on the first part of the course. These are some of the questions we ask:

- What defines a democracy? How do democracies work?
- What is the state of democracy currently?
- Are democracies really in a crisis? In which sense? If so, would that be a real problem?
- Why are democracy backsliding?
- What are the main challenges they are facing?
- What are the possible responses to the crisis of democracy?

Organisation

In the first seminar I introduce the questions, contents and organisation of the course. A three-day workshop follows where students present the profiles of single countries of the region.

The core of the course is then organised around four thematic blocks: political systems, political violence, religion and politics, and 'looking back to look forward'. Each block is normally organised around three seminars. In the first seminar, I will introduce the main topics that we analyse in the block. In the second and third seminar, I will make a shorter introduction and leave the floor to student presentations and seminar discussions.

In the concluding seminar we reappraise the questions asked at the beginning of course, and discuss what we learned along the way.

Prerequisites

The course assumes no background knowledge. However, a general background of political science (comparative politics and international relations) is certainly useful. Normally the core reference texts should provide the necessary background, but feel free to approach me and I will be happy to recommend some background readings.

Course materials

Core reference text

- Caramani, D. (Ed.) (2023). Comparative Politics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Supplementary readings

See the list of references following the detailed contents of the course below. We will discuss around 50 papers in class, excluding all the additional materials that will form the bases for the case studies seminars. But you should not be intimidated by the amount of readings. Before each seminar, you will normally be expected to read one book chapter or article on the 'general' topic under discussion – see below. The remaining readings will normally be optional and/or presented by the students responsible for presentations each day. Of course you are welcome to read those too, but you are not required nor expected to.

Method of assessment

Assessment is based on class participation and presentations (30%), final paper (40%), and oral exam (30%).

The presentations will take place during the second and third parts of the course. They will address democratic processes and challenges. The third part of the course will be devoted to case studies seminars, which address democratic processes and challenges in world regions and a selection of countries therein, either a theoretical or empirical perspective or in a specific country or area.

The presentations should normally be organised with an introduction that illustrates the topic, or region, or country, and its relevance; followed by a presentation of theoretical and/or empirical evidence. The presentation should normally not last more than 15 mins, and will be followed by seminar discussions.

The paper should be between 3,500 and 5,000 words, including title, author, an abstract (max. 150 words), and up to 5 keywords. It should comprise at least 3-4 sections, including an introduction, a theoretical section with a review of the literature; one empirical section; some conclusions; a list of references (use APA citation style and Zotero to compile your bibliography in word).

You should propose a topic to me sending a 1-page (max) outline (including topic, research question and how this will be addressed). Do not start writing before my formal confirmation!

I will expect that you demonstrate ability in drafting original work also based on autonomous research of some data among the several sources discussed in class.

You must send me the paper one week before the exam.

The oral exam will start with a discussion of the paper, which will provide the basis for a broader discussion of the issues discussed during the course.

Detailed course contents and readings

DATE	TOPICS AND READINGS
03/10/2024	**Presentation of the course** *Required*: Caramani (2023), Ch. 0, 1, 2. *Additional*: Keman (2011)
04/10/2024	**Comparative politics and the comparative method** *Required*: Caramani (2023), Ch. 3 *Additional*: Della Porta (2008); King et al. (1994), Ch. 1; Lieberman (2005); Lijphart (1975); Morton & Williams (2008); Schmitter (2008); Seawright & Gerring (2008).
10/10/2024	**Democratisation** *Required:* Caramani (2023), Ch. 4, 5, 6 *Additional:* Huntington (1991); Lijphart (2012), Ch. 1, 2, 3; Wahman et al. (2013).
11/10/2024	**Institutions** *Required:* Caramani (2023), Ch. 7, 8 *Additional:* Lijphart (2012), Ch. 6, 7.
17/10/2024	NO SEMINAR
18/10/2024	NO SEMINAR
24/10/2024	**Political parties** *Required:* Caramani (2023), Ch. 11, 13, 14 *Additional:* Farrell & Webb (2000); Lijphart (2012), Ch. 5, 8
25/10/2024	**Political culture and action** *Required:* Caramani (2023), Ch. 17, 18, 19 *Additional:* Esser & Strömbäck (2014), Chapter 1; Norris (2017)
31/10/2024	NO SEMINAR – READING WEEK
01/11/2024	NO SEMINAR – READING WEEK
07/11/2024	**Democratic triumph and crisis** *Required:* Caramani (2023), Ch. 25, Berneo (2016) *Additional:* Little & Meng (2024); Lührmann & Lindberg (2019), Papada et al. (2023).
08/11/2024	**Populism and authoritarianism** *Required:* Mudde (2017), ch. 1, 2, 5 *Additional:* Caramani (2017); Kriesi & Pappas (2015), Ch. 1; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser (2012).
14/11/2024	**Economic and political integration** *Required:* Caramani (2023), Ch. 23, 24

	Additional: Börzel & Risse (2018); Kriesi et al. (2008); Kriesi & Hutter (2019); Morlino & Raniolo (2017) Ch. 2.
15/11/2024	**Public discontent and attitudes towards democracy** *Required:* Przeworski (2019) Ch. 5; Shin (2017) *Additional:* IDEA international (2017); Martini & Quaranta (2020), Ch. 4; Van der Meer (2017).
21/11/2024	**Economic grievances, values, and political intolerance** *Required:* Norris & Inglehart (2016), Ch. 2; Przeworski (2019) Ch. 6 *Additional:* Rooduijn (2018); Norris & Inglehart (2016), Ch. 8; Schäfer (2022).
22/11/2024	**Case studies seminars - North America**
28/11/2024	**Case studies seminars - Latin America**
29/11/2024	**Case studies seminars - Middle East and North Africa**
05/12/2024	**Case studies seminars - Middle East and North Africa**
06/12/2024	**Case studies seminars - Asia**
12/12/2024	**Case studies seminars - Sub-Saharan Africa**
13/12/2024	**Make-up/wrap up**

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