

Central European University
Department of Political Science
Fall semester 2023

POLS5348 Comparative European Politics

Instructor:

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Class: Mondays, 10.50-12.30 (QS A415), Wednesdays, 10.50-12.30 (QS C210)

Introduction

This course provides students with an overview of the political systems of European states. It does so through a focus on Europe's smallest countries. This unusual format is adopted in the conviction that "the intellectual payoffs to the discipline of studying small states are potentially enormous" (Veenendaal and Corbett 2015: 527). Through the lens of Europe's small countries, the course will shine light on key processes, structures, actors, and outcomes in politics. It will cover European history as well as contemporary challenges. Topics include state formation, form of government, type of democracy, the European Union, political parties, electoral systems, constitutions, ethnic diversity, democratization, and de-democratization.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be familiar with key topics and concepts in comparative politics, be able to distinguish and categorize political regimes, have an understanding of the working of political institutions, and possess the instruments to compare and analyze democratic political systems. Student will also learn the capitals of all European micro-states.

Course requirements and assessment

Class attendance is mandatory. Should you be unable to attend class, please notify the instructor in advance.

- Active class participation is expected and graded (10%)
- Outline for in-class presentation (10%)
- In-class presentation (30%)
- Discussant (10%)
- Written comments (2x5)
- Final exam (30%)

The presentation should last not more than 15 minutes and should address the theme of the week in a comparative manner (meaning it should cover at least two cases, not counting the case at the heart of that week). Case selection and geographical coverage are not limited to Europe. In fact, comparisons that transcend Europe are very welcome. The presentation should start with a question and then proceed to answer the question systematically. The question can be theoretical, empirical, policy-related, or normative. The presentation's purpose is to inform. It should be based on additional reading and research.

One week prior to the presentation, students are asked to submit a one-page written outline and to discuss this with the instructor during his office hours. The outline is graded as follows: A (took the task seriously), F (did not submit or did not bother), B (some evidence of work/thought, but more can be expected). The outline is also shared with the discussant.

Each presentation is discussed by a fellow student. The discussion should last not more than 8 minutes. The criteria to be discussed will be discussed in class during the first week.

Twice during the semester, students should submit written questions / comments on Moodle on the reading that they did. This should be for weeks where they don't act as presenter or discussant. The written comments are graded as follows: A (took the task seriously), F (did not submit or did not bother), B (some evidence of work/thought, but more can be expected).

Schedule

In most weeks, we will use the Monday session to introduce the theme of the week and to discuss the reading. The Wednesday session is devoted to the presentations. The first three weeks and the final week are organized differently. The first weeks build the foundation for the course, introducing students to the main approaches. The final week is used for an on-demand session and a final exam.

Course material

All readings and other course material will be uploaded on Moodle. The readings are a mix of recent journal articles and selected chapters from textbooks in comparative European politics. This combination provides students with a state-of-the-art overview of the literature as well as recent original research. Each week (references to) additional reading will be uploaded.

Week 1 Introduction

Monday (16 September): Introduction

Reading: Syllabus

Wednesday (18 September): Why study small states?

Reading:

Wouter Veenendaal and Jack Corbett (2015) Why Small States Offer Important Answers to Large Questions, *Comparative Political Studies* 48(4): 527-549.

Week 2 The European Union and multi-level governance

Monday (25 September)

Reading:

Simon Hix and Bjørn Høyland (2022) The Political Systems of the European Union, 4th edition. London: Bloomsbury, chapter 1 Introduction: Explaining the EU Political System, pp.1-22.

Wednesday (27 September)

Reading:

Catherine de Vries, Sara Hobolt, Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan Slapin (2021) *Foundations of European Politics: A Comparative Approach*, chapter 3 Multilevel Politics in Europe, pp.32-51.

Week 3 Type of democracy and democratic performance

Monday (2 October)

Matthijs Bogaards (2017) Comparative Political Regimes: Consensus and Majoritarian Democracy, in William Thompson (ed.) *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, available at:

<http://politics.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-65>.

Wednesday (4 October):

Reading:

Francis Fukuyama (2013) What is Governance? *Governance* 26(3): 347-368.

Week 4 Liechtenstein and forms of government

Monday (9 October)

Reading:

Wouter Veenendaal (2015) A Big Prince in a Tiny Realm: Smallness, Monarchy and Political Legitimacy in the Principality of Liechtenstein, *Swiss Political Science Review* 21(2): 333-349.

Petra Schleiter (2020) The Executive Branch, in Rory Costello and Neil Robinson (eds.) *Comparative European Politics: Distinctive Democracies, Common Challenges*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 143-162.

NO CLASS THIS WEDNESDAY. WE WILL RESCHEDULE.

Week 5 Kosovo, state formation, and democratization

Monday (16 October)

Reading:

Adem Beha and Gësim Selaci (2018) Statebuilding Without Exit Strategy in Kosovo, *Region* 7(2): 97-124.

Thomas Denk and Sara Lehtinen (2016) Two Modes of Democratisation: Transition and State-Formation, *Quality and Quantity* 50(6): 2331-2346.

Wednesday (18 October): Presentations

Week 6 Malta and electoral systems

Monday (23 October)

Reading:

Wolfgang Hirczy de Miño and John Lane (2000) Malta: STV in a Two-Party System, in Shaun Bowler and Bernard Grofman (eds.) *Elections in Australia, Ireland, and Malta under the Single Transferable Vote: Reflections on an Embedded Institution*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, pp.178-204.

Jean-Benoit Pilet and Alan Renwick (2021) Electoral Systems, in Rory Costello and Neil Robinson (eds.) *Comparative European Politics: Distinctive Democracies, Common Challenges*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.12-30.

Wednesday (25 October): Presentations

Week 7 Luxembourg and government formation

Monday (30 October)

Reading:

Patrick Dumont and Lieven de Winter (2000) Luxembourg: Stable Coalitions in a Pivotal Party System, in Wolfgang Müller and Kaare Strøm (eds.) *Coalition Governments in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.399-432.

Catherine de Vries, Sara Hobolt, Sven-Oliver Proksch and Jonathan Slapin (2021) *Foundations of European Politics: A Comparative Approach*, chapter 10 Political Systems and Government Formation, pp.171-191.

NO CLASS ON WEDNESDAY (NATIONAL HOLIDAY)

Week 8 The Baltics and ethnic diversity

Monday (6 November)

Reading:

Timofey Agarin (2016) Extending the Concept of Ethnocracy: Exploring the Debate in the Baltic Context, *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Journal* 8(3): 81-99.

Rudy Andeweg (2000) Consociational Democracy, *Annual Review of Political Science* 3: 509-536.

Wednesday (8 November): Presentations

Week 9 Montenegro and democratic backsliding

Monday (13 November)

Reading:

Olivera Komar (2020) The Elephant in the Room: Illiberal Politics in Montenegro, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 20(1): 61-80.

Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman (2021) The Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding, *Journal of Democracy* 32(4): 27-41.

Wednesday (15 November): Presentations

Week 10 Iceland: Crisis and constitution

Monday (20 November)

Reading:

Eirikur Bergmann (2016) Participatory Constitutional Deliberation in the Wake of Crisis: The Case of Iceland, in Min Reuchamps and Jane Suiter (eds.) *Constitutional Deliberative Democracy in Europe*. Colchester: ECPR Press, pp.15-32.

Nuno Garoupa and Pedro C. Magalhães (2020) Constitutions and Courts, in Rory Costello and Neil Robinson (eds.) *Comparative European Politics: Distinctive Democracies, Common Challenges*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.205-226.

Wednesday (22 November): Presentations

Week 11 San Marino and political parties

Monday (27 November)

Reading:

Fernando Castel Bértoa (2022) San Marino's Increasing Instability, in Fernando Castel Bértoa and Patrick Dumont (eds.) *Party Politics in European Microstates*. London: Routledge, pp.XX.

André Krouwel (2020) Political Parties, in Rory Costello and Neil Robinson (eds.) *Comparative European Politics: Distinctive Democracies, Common Challenges*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.31-56.

Wednesday (29 November): Presentations

Week 12

Monday: On-demand session. Students decide on the topic and suggest literature.

Wednesday: In-class final exam.