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Parliamentary democracies in Europe

Office Hours in Turlington Hall, 3326C: MWF 12-1 pm and by appointment

PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS, SUBJECT TO CHANGES UNTIL FIRST COURSE WEEK

Description

In contrast to other parts of the world, such as Latin America or the United States, European countries are characterized by parliamentary models of democracy. This course will investigate the functions of parliament as well as the institutional roles of government and opposition in parliamentary democracies. Furthermore, it shall discuss the procedures of legislation, problems of representation, and the relationship between parliament and political parties. In doing so, the course will cover conceptual approaches to parliamentary democracy and cover relevant countries in both Western and Central Eastern Europe.

Requirements

Attendance (10% of grade).

One unexcused absence over the course of the semester is allowed; after that, unexcused absences count against your attendance grade. Excused absences do not count against your grade, but these require prior consultation with the instructor. According to the Office of the University Registrar, “acceptable reasons for absence from class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, and professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused.” For further information about the University of Florida’s attendance policy, please see the current Undergraduate Catalogue (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>).

Active participation (20% of grade)

Students are expected to attend class and participate actively, share their opinions and questions and take part in discussions. Required texts will be addressed in the discussions and their reading is mandatory. Thus, the grade consists of the extent to which students engage in class discussions (10%) and the text-related knowledge they display in these discussions (10%). Student participation is a very important component of this course. Full and active engagement with the readings, lectures, and discussions in the class is expected. In the interests of fairness and given the size of the course, there will be no extra credit assignments.

Oral presentation (20% of grade)

The idea of oral presentations is to provide initial thoughts on the topic of each week. Each student shall give an oral presentation on a subject related to the overall topic of the respective week, starting week 3. Presentations will take place on Fridays (or Wednesdays

if there is no regular class on Friday) and should take approx. 10-15 minutes per student. Depending on class size, some presentations may likely be done in pairs or threes, which might extend their duration. Presentations will address major questions on the topic that was discussed during the week and shall provide further research, different perspectives, and inspire discussions in class. To stay on track, it is highly recommended to talk about your ideas during the office hours, where also additional texts for the presentation can be provided.

Midterm exam (20% of grade)

The exam will cover information from required readings of the first 7 weeks of the course through a mixture of essay questions and multiple choice questions. The exam shall take one hour.

Final paper (30% of grade).

In the final paper, which is by the end of week 13, students shall reflect on (1) a specific text discussed in class, (2) a research question that touches upon several readings of the course, or (3) another topic related to the course. The paper shall consist of 10 to 12 pages (double-spaced), including 1 to 2 pages of bibliography. Discussing the idea of the final paper in the office hours is not required but highly advisable.

Office hours

Unless announced otherwise, office hours take place MWF 12-1 pm and by appointment via email. Open door principle applies. No further registration or heads-up is needed.

Policy on Exam Make-Ups

I will only schedule exam make-ups for students who contact me by email at least one hour before the exam and who can provide official documentation why they were physically unable to take the exam.

Grading Scale

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|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|
| A 93-100 | B+ 87-89 | C+ 77-79 | D+ 67-69 | E Below 60 |
| A- 90-92 | B 83-86 | C 73-76 | D 63-66 | |
| | B- 80-82 | C- 70-72 | D- 60-62 | |

Texts

The required texts and most other readings will be available on-line through CANVAS. The required texts are to be read at each course week. All further readings are optional. The reading schedule below is subject to change depending on the pace of progress and unforeseen scheduling changes. Please refer to the online syllabus for the latest version.

** indicates required readings for each week.*

All readings tba

Week 1: Introduction

PART I: PARLIAMENT

Week 2: Parliamentary and presidential democracy

Week 3: Semi-presidentialism

Week 4: Functions of parliament I: legislation

Week 5: Functions of parliament II: election and scrutiny

Week 6: Functions of parliament IV: communication

PART II: GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION

Week 7: Majority and minority governments

Week 8: Roles and functions of the opposition

PART III: PROBLEMS OF PARLIAMENTARISM

Week 9: Members of parliament: learning in institutions

Week 10: (Distorted) representation I: Gender

Week 11: (Distorted) representation II: Wealth

PART IV: PARLIAMENTARISM IN THE EU

Week 12: The EP in the institutional structure of the EU

Week 13: MEPs, EPGs, and national parties: servants of two masters?

Week 14: European elections: parliament without legitimization?

Week 15: Final reflections

Final Notes

Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this

class, you should contact the Dean of Students Office so that special arrangements can be made to accommodate you. It is your responsibility to do so at the beginning of the semester and to communicate directly with the professor during the first week of classes (or as soon as the disability occurs).

Honor Code: Academic dishonesty, including cheating on exams and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in such activities will be dealt with in accordance with University policy. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism, and what the university policies are.

If you have doubts, we please discuss with the professor immediately. After the infringement is too late. Please refer to the current Undergraduate Catalogue for more information on the Student Honor code (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>). Students who have questions about these policies, should contact the undergraduate advisement center for additional information.